00020212

...BOMBAY
...BRANCH
...OF THE

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

MEMOIRS

OF

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

SIR THOMAS PICTON,

G.C.B. &c.

INCLUDING HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

FROM ORIGINALS IN POSSESSION OF HIS FAMILY.

BY H. B. ROBINSON.

20212
ac

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

xx-6-16

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to His Majesty.
1835.

923.542
Pic/Rob/mem
20212

TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, K.G.

&c. &c.

Sir Thomas Picton fought and fell under your Grace's command—England never lost a more devoted soldier, nor your Grace a more zealous officer.

This Memoir is dedicated to your Grace in Sir Thomas Picton's own words, when, in reply to the House of Commons, upon receiving the thanks of that honourable assembly for his services, he observed:

"It would be unfortunate indeed if we failed entirely to reflect some of the rays of the great luminary that directed us."

London, 1835.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the numerous distinguished officers whose brilliant services were familiar to their countrymen at the close of the late war, many have already found biographers. Such memoirs, when drawn from authentic sources, are a valuable addition to our annals: they contribute to that mass of materials from which hereafter, when all inducement to partial praise or censure shall have ceased, an adequate history will be drawn of that eventful period.

Of these companions of the one great chief, none was more illustrious than Picton. Always engaged in important commands—present at the most daring and successful movements, his history is identified with that of every conspicuous event in the Peninsular War. A

more zealous or a braver soldier there was not in our army.

Some brief memoirs of Sir Thomas Picton have been published; but these are devoid of authority, and are generally incorrect. It was a consideration of these circumstances which induced the author, who had access to authentic materials, to undertake the present Work.

Some years since, when he was in South Wales, accident gave him an introduction to the brother of the late Sir Thomas Picton, the Reverend Edward Picton, of Iscoed, near Ferryside, Carmarthenshire. This beautiful spot had long been the property of the general, and by him it was bequeathed to its present possessor. The mansion presented in almost every corner a bust, a painting, or some other memorial of Sir Thomas; and the author dwelt on every record with a deep interest. Years passed; and it then recurred to his memory, that when at Iscoed he had heard Mr. Picton speak of letters and manuscripts in his possession which had belonged to his brother. Having conceived the idea of writing a life of the general, the author

applied to be permitted the use of these valuable papers in the composition of his intended Memoir; and in a short time afterwards he was gratified by the receipt of a box containing the whole of the documents in Mr. Picton's possession relating to the public career of his gallant brother.

From these manuscripts, the recollections of his family and friends, together with the valuable communications of those who served with him throughout the whole of his distinguished career, the present biography has been composed. It was not, however, possible that a life of Sir Thomas Picton could be written without embracing a general outline of the operations of the British army in the Peninsula. This was the scene of his principal services, and we must necessarily follow him into the field where his renown was acquired.

One subject connected with the early life of Sir Thomas Picton possesses a painful interest:—the protracted prosecution to which he was subjected. The grave has, however, closed over nearly all who took an active part in those proceedings; and the brilliant career and glori-

ous death of Sir Thomas Picton have wholly removed the stigma upon that occasion attempted to be inflicted on him.

The letters of Sir Thomas introduced into this work, although not numerous, are full of interest. The majority of them were written within a few days after the different occurrences to which they relate. This gives them a value to which more elaborate compositions cannot lay claim. The unpremeditated conceptions of a strong and comprehensive mind possess a truth and freshness which no after consideration can improve.

In some instances the excitement of battle had scarcely passed away when the general sat down to calm the apprehension of fraternal affection or friendly solicitude. The soldier can be traced in every line. He seldom speaks of his own dangers and escapes, but confines himself to a relation of the proceedings of "his division"—the brave "fighting division;" how his soldiers conducted themselves; the part they bore in the struggles of the day, their heroism, and their losses: but of himself, who was ever at their head, and who shared with them every danger and privation, he says little.

Once, and only once, does he allude to his own danger: this occurs in a letter to his brother just after the battle of Vittoria, in which he observes, "I was very fortunate, having escaped with only one shot-hole in my great-coat."

In consequence of this total absence of personal details in his correspondence, the author has been happy to avail himself of the information communicated by those who served with him. Many of these are still living, and to them he is indebted for many particulars of Sir Thomas Picton's actions, his judgment, decision, and heroism. The author regrets that he is restrained from strengthening the authority of these communications by the absence of permission to make public the names of the distinguished officers to whom he is indebted for them.

London, Sept. 1835.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage. — Education. — Enters the Army. — Repairs to Gibraltar. — Made Lieutenant. — Captain of the Seventy-fifth Foot. — Leaves Gibraltar. — Siege. — His Regiment disbanded.—Serious Mutiny in consequence.—His spirited Conduct. —Receives the Royal Approbation.—Placed upon Half-pay.—Pursuits. — Personal Appearance.—Martial Disposition. . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

Unsuccessful attempts to obtain employment.—Embarks for the West Indies.— Joins Sir John Vaughan. — Made Deputy Quarter-Master-General. — Superseded by General Knox. — Introduction to Sir Ralph Abercromby.—Assists in the Capture of St. Lucia and St. Vincent.—Voyage to England and return to Martinique with Sir Ralph Abercromby. — Capture of Trinidad.— Made Commandant. — Instructions from Sir Ralph Abercromby. . . 20

CHAPTER III.

Sir Ralph Abercromby's opinion of Colonel Picton.—Picton's Enemies.—Letter from General Maitland.—Nature of

the trust reposed in Colonel Picton as Governor of Trinidad. — His first act in that office. — Address from the Inhabitants. — Don Christoval de Robles. — His recommendation to Colonel Picton. — State of Trinidad when he was appointed to the government. — Impulse to desertion subdued. — Preparations by the Spaniards to regain possession of the Colony. — Unprotected state of the Coast. — Improvement in the aspect of affairs. . Page 41

CHAPTER IV.

Fatal Effects of the Rainy Season. — Frustration of a Conspiracy. — Estimation by his Majesty's Government of Colonel Picton's exertions. — His Views as to further Conquests on the Continent adjacent to Trinidad. — Curious passage in Picton's Correspondence relative to the Battle of the Nile. — Cruisers sent to protect the Trade of Trinidad. — Proposed Reward for Colonel Picton's Head. — His amusing Letters on this subject. — Spanish Inhabitants of Trinidad averse to the Restoration of the Colony to the Mother Country. — Correspondence on the subject. . 66

CHAPTER V.

Character of Colonel Picton's Administration. — Reward of his services. — Attempt to injure his reputation. — Formally appointed Governor of Trinidad. — Change of Ministry at home. — Trinidad put in commission. — Insulting treatment of Governor Picton. — His feelings in consequence. — He determines to resign. 85

CHAPTER VI.

Statement relative to Dr. Lynch and the Under Secretary of State. — Conflicting Affidavits of those gentlemen. — Colonel Draper and Mr. Sullivan. — General Picton's reception of Colonel Fullarton in Trinidad. — Extraordinary mo-

tion in Council. — General Picton resigns his office of Commissioner.—His Letter to the Attorney-general of Trinidad. — Difficulties which General Picton had to encounter in assuming the government of Trinidad. — Colonel Fullarton's pamphlet.—Charges brought against General Picton. —Colonel Fullarton publicly rebuked by Sir Samuel Hood. — Extract from Colonel Fullarton's pamphlet. Page 96

CHAPTER VII.

Testimonials in favour of General Picton's abilities and conduct. — Flattering Address from the Inhabitants of Trinidad to the King. — Realization of Dr. Lynch's "Prophetic Dream." — General Picton's resignation accepted. — Leaves Trinidad. — Arrival at Barbadoes. — Joins General Grinfield in an Expedition against St. Lucia and Tobago. — Capture of the former. — General Orders. — The Fleet sails for Tobago. — Its Capitulation. — Despatch from the Commander-in-chief. — General Picton appointed Commandant. — Excitement in England against him. — Its effects. — Leaves Tobago. — Arrives in London. — Artful devices to inflame the British Public. — Their success. 122

CHAPTER VIII.

General Picton's patriotism. — Threatened Invasion of England by Napoleon. — Picton's Letter to Mr. Addington. — His plan for the defence of the country. — Its reception. — Prosecution continued. — Interview with Lord Hobart. — Arrested by order of the Privy Council. — Enormous bail. — Indicted upon a criminal information. — Observations upon the Indictment. — Mandamus to obtain Evidence at Trinidad.—Trial. . . . 141

CHAPTER IX.

Summary of facts extracted from the evidence.—Perjured Witness. — Malicious insinuation. — Strong evidence against

the truth of the charges. — Mr. Garrow's ingenuity. — Verdict. . . . Page 163

CHAPTER X.

Effects of the Verdict upon the friends of each party. — General Picton's Letter to Sir Samuel Hood. 179.

CHAPTER XI.

Motion for a new trial "made absolute."— Investigation in the Privy Council brought to a conclusion. — Their Report. — Remarks upon.—A second issued.— Sir Samuel Hood offers himself as a Candidate for Westminster. — Colonel Fullarton's attack. — "The Picton Veil, or, The Hood of Westminster," a poem. — The Duke of Queensberry.—His munificent offer to General Picton. . 199

CHAPTER XII.

Second trial of General Picton.—Testimonials to his character and abilities. — Inhabitants of Trinidad present him with a sword. — Their magnificent subscription to defray the expenses of his trial.—The above sum generously returned by Picton.—Argument on a special verdict. . 215

CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition to Walcheren. — Attack on and surrender of Flushing.—General Picton's Letter relative to this event.— Appointed Governor of Flushing. — The Walcheren Fever. — Return of General Picton to England.—Sir John Moore's Retreat from Corunna, and its consequences.—Movements of the British Army under Lord Wellington. . 229

CHAPTER XIV.

Retreat of the British Army upon Torres Vedras.—General Picton receives orders to join the Army in Spain.—

His anxiety to reach the field of operation.—Appointed to the command of the Third Division.—Skirmishes and manœuvres of General Crawfurd. . . Page 249

CHAPTER XV.

Investment of Ciudad Rodrigo.— Picton's opinion of the situation of the Army. — Operations of General Crawfurd. — Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, and advance of the French Army. — Death of Colonel Talbot. — Affair of the Coa.— Colonel Napier's account, and remarks thereon. — Charge against General Picton refuted. 272

CHAPTER XVI.

Fall of Almeida.—Plans of Massena.—Letter from General Picton to Colonel Pleydel. — Battle of Busacos.—Picton's Letter descriptive of that affair.—Whimsical incident during the Battle. 300

CHAPTER XVII.

Colonel Napier's account of the Battle of Busacos examined. — General Picton's Letter to Lord Wellington. — Erroneous statements in the "History of the Peninsular War." 327

CHAPTER XVIII.

Operations of the Allied Army.—Massena's movements. —Scene of horror and confusion.—Retrograde movement of the Allies.— Position within the Lines of Torres Vedras. —Plan and defence of those lines.—Disposition of the several Allied Corps. — Excesses of Massena's troops. — Lord Wellington's masterly plans. — Massena's critical situation. —Pursuits and occupations of the Allies.—General Picton's rebuke of his men. 355

CHAPTER XIX.

Retreat of the French Army. — General Picton's account of the advance of the Allied Forces.—General Picton's accuracy proved by the statements of the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis of Londonderry, and Colonel Napier.—Indefatigable exertions of General Picton. — The "Fighting Division."—Depredations of the Enemy.—Discontent among Massena's Generals. . . . Page 377

ERRATA.

Vol. I. p. 331, line 18, for Champalimaud " read "Champlemond."
Vol. II. p. 99, line 2 of note, for "otill live" read "recovered from their wounds."
„ p. 112, last line, for "Pandaleras" read "Pardaleras."

TO THE BINDER.

The Plan of Operations at the Sierra de Busacos to be placed opposite page 315.

THE

LIFE

OF

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

SIR THOMAS PICTON,

G.C.B.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage. — Education. — Enters the Army. — Repairs to Gibraltar. — Made Lieutenant. — Captain of the Seventy-fifth Foot. — Leaves Gibraltar. — Siege. — His Regiment Disbanded. — Serious Mutiny in consequence. — His Spirited Conduct. — Receives the Royal Approbation. — Placed upon Half-pay. — Pursuits. — Personal Appearance. — Martial Disposition.

THOMAS PICTON, the subject of the present memoir, was born in the month of August 1758, at the residence of his father, Thomas Picton, Esq. of Poyston, in the county of Pembroke. Thomas was a younger brother; but, unlike the majority of young men so circumstanced, he was not entirely dependent

upon his own exertions for future fortune: on the contrary, young Picton was entitled upon the death of his mother to considerable property; and this event, which happened during his lifetime, rendered him afterwards independent of any profession.

But this in his early youth was only a distant expectation; and it was then necessary that he should attach himself to some profitable pursuit. His earliest thoughts and inclinations led him to select that of arms; and, according to the words of his reverend brother, "he would not hear of any other."

The prospects in a soldier's life are certainly not such as would induce a sober preference; but to the young, the army has irresistible charms. Its constant excitement, occasional successes, and the hope of fame, are delusive attractions; although the many who have fought and fallen without their names being known beyond the circle of their private friends, prove this hope to be as vain as it is dazzling.

With an ardour for all military studies, young Picton particularly directed his atten-

tion to those sciences which make the rising soldier an ornament to his profession; and the proficiency he soon acquired in these, gave him at once a superiority over his companions, who had contented themselves with the inapplicable course of education prescribed at our public and private schools. Latin and Greek are there made the groundwork for the soldier and the sailor, as well as for the lawyer and the divine; whereas the mathematics are the great requisite to the aspirant for military fame, and a knowledge of Euclid will be of more professional utility to him in after-life than an acquaintance with all the Greek and Roman classics. Fortunate in the advice of a sensible parent, and having a natural taste for the studies applicable to warfare, Picton was permitted to follow the bent of his inclinations: but it is not thence to be inferred that the young soldier was allowed entirely to neglect the acquirement of those branches of education which are indispensable to the character of a gentleman. Before he commenced his military education, his friends had taken care to instil into him some little, although of

course, at his tender age, not a very extensive, knowledge of the classics, and of the literature of his own country.

After leaving school he was sent, previously to entering upon his professional career, to a military academy kept by a Frenchman named Lachée, where he obtained a great addition to his knowledge of mathematics and the art of war.

In December 1771, being then thirteen years of age, he obtained an ensigncy in the Twelfth regiment of foot, then commanded by his uncle, Lieutenant-colonel William Picton, Lord Cornwallis being colonel. The name of Thomas Picton appears in the Gazette for February 1772, as appointed ensign in that regiment; the date of his first commission being January the 22nd in that year.

The present age would condemn the admission of so young a soldier into our army as unnatural and dangerous: for it is surely unnatural to expose to all the perils and privations of war those who still require maternal care; and dangerous, to place in a probable situation of responsibility one who can possess neither judgment nor resolution, qualities so

absolutely necessary in the performance of every military duty. When Ensign Picton entered the army it was no uncommon occurrence for the captain of a company to be a boy at school, while many of equally tender years were already employed in active service: and yet it is certain that the English army, during the late struggle with continental Europe, produced officers who in courage and military excellence might rival those of any nation in the world; although nearly the whole of these entered the army at the same time of life as the subject of this memoir.

Nearly two years elapsed after obtaining his commission before young Picton joined his regiment; but during this period, and, in fact, during the first six years of his holding this rank, he had no pay, in consequence of the peculiar circumstances under which he received his ensigncy. A captain in the regiment, who had rendered himself obnoxious to the rest of the officers, had been allowed to retire upon full pay; and in consequence of this arrangement, the youngest ensign without purchase received no pay, the youngest lieutenant without purchase received that of an

ensign, and the youngest captain that of a lieutenant.

Our young soldier left the military academy of Monsieur Lachée to join his regiment at Gibraltar, there to undergo the unvarying, and, in general, uninteresting, routine of garrison duty. Those, and they are but few, who still live, and remember that early period of his career, speak of him as manifesting even then that strongly marked character for firmness and decision which distinguished him through life.

From the boyish ensign he soon became the steady but inquisitive soldier; his principal delight, whilst upon duty in this fortress, (which presents every feature of the engineer's art,) was to wander through the mazes of fortification, trace the operation and design of the numerous works, observe the choice of position, formation, and support of the endless batteries, while he would frequently be arranging plans of attack, with additional defences which the garrison might erect in case of being driven from some of their positions. With these plans, and a host of inquiries, young Picton was in the habit of almost

persecuting the officers of the garrison; and they are recorded here as an illustration of the decided taste which he thus early betrayed for a military life.

It was another occasional source of amusement to him, whilst stationed at Gibraltar, to make excursions into the interior of Spain; and during these expeditions he obtained that knowledge of the language, which enabled him in after years to fill that important situation which produced so great an influence over both his fortunes and his happiness. But it was not only the Spanish language that he acquired during this period of inaction; his leisure hours, which were by far too many for his active disposition, were devoted to the study of such books as he could procure calculated to advance him in the knowledge of his professional duties; in addition to which, he was greatly indebted to his uncle for many practical hints drawn from his own observations during a long life of constant and distinguished service.*

* The estimation in which this meritorious officer was held by his sovereign, cannot be better expressed than by the following extract from a manuscript in his own hand-

In March 1777, Ensign Picton was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the same regiment. He was, however, now weary of the monotony of garrison duty, and anxiously looked forward to an appointment to some active service. During the five years he had been at Gibraltar, he had served under Generals Sir Robert Boyd and Lord Heathfield; but the merits of one in so humble a rank as that held by Lieutenant Picton seldom call forth the particular notice of their superiors;

writing, in reference to his being appointed lieutenant-colonel of the Twelfth regiment, which is worthy of record as exhibiting the tenacious recollection of merit, and the pleasure in rewarding it, which marked the character of George the Third. "When Lieutenant-colonel Picton went to court to kiss hands on his appointment, having had the honour after the levee of being admitted to an audience in the King's closet, he addressed his Majesty with profound respect, expressing his most dutiful and grateful acknowledgments for the honour that had been conferred upon him. The Sovereign, with the utmost complacency, was pleased to say: 'You are solely obliged to Captain Picton, who in Germany commanded the grenadier company of the Twelfth regiment during the last war:' alluding in particular to the colonel's having had the honour of being thanked, as captain of the grenadiers, by Prince Ferdinand, in the public orders of the army, in consequence of the report made by the then Hereditary Prince of Brunswick of his behaviour under his Serene Highness's command at the affair of Zierenberg."

and he requested his uncle to obtain for him an exchange into some regiment which had an earlier prospect of taking the field. This, in times when officers were more in request and vacancies more frequent, was not a very difficult task; and in January 1778 he was gazetted captain in the Seventy-fifth, or Prince of Wales' regiment of foot; in consequence of which, he returned to England, and thus, by a singular fatality, was debarred from participating in one of the most memorable and important sieges recorded in modern history.

Within a few months from the period of his leaving Gibraltar, the Spaniards fitted out their grand expedition for the investure and attack of this key to the Mediterranean. The history of this siege is one of unparalleled interest. Every contrivance of modern warfare was had recourse to by the besiegers, directed by the ablest engineers of France and Spain: the eyes of all Europe were fixed upon the struggle. The English nation, confident in the courage and skill of its defenders, watched with anxious, but fervent hope, the progress of the operations. The Twelfth regiment, commanded by Captain Picton's uncle,

who was in 1779 appointed colonel, bore a distinguished part in the defence; and it was always with a feeling of deep regret that the subject of this memoir spoke of the circumstance of his leaving Gibraltar at that particular period, by which he lost all participation in the defence of that fortress.

The details of this memorable siege are well known; and it is but necessary to remind the reader, that after almost incessant operations for three years in erecting batteries, making assaults, and in unsuccessful endeavours to prevent our fleets affording relief to the garrison, the besiegers made one last and desperate effort on the 13th September 1782: the garrison were however prepared at all points; an incessant fire of red-hot shot destroyed the Spanish shipping, dismounted their guns, and burnt their batteries; at the same time, the British troops repulsed every assault, drove the assailants from the works, and, after an immense slaughter, compelled them to abandon the siege, leaving Gibraltar from that day in the undisputed possession of the English.

Captain Picton had much reason to regret his impatience in quitting the Twelfth regi-

ment. In the pursuit of active employment he was particularly unfortunate, as he was now doomed to undergo the still more irksome and monotonous routine of doing duty in provincial towns and home garrisons; during the whole of which time he was continually reading in the public prints the spirit-stirring accounts of the progress of the siege of Gibraltar. Another five years of his life thus passed without calling forth any of those brilliant talents which even at this period were apparent to those who knew him intimately. But after this unprofitable service of five years, it was his fate to be thrown even farther from the sphere to which his inclinations led him, and for which he was so admirably calculated.

The sudden reduction which took place in the military force of Great Britain in the year 1783, occasioned much disappointment among those aspirants for fame who had recently obtained commissions in the new regiments which had been raised the preceding year. These were almost without any exception reduced or totally disbanded; by which a great number of individuals in humble life were thrown back upon their own resources, the

exhaustion of which had in most instances been their only inducement for entering the army: it will readily be believed that this necessary measure was exceedingly obnoxious to those whom it thus affected, and on several occasions these feelings were expressed to an alarming extent.

The Seventy-fifth was at this period quartered in Bristol, Captain Picton being at the time senior, and consequently commanding, officer. In accordance with the general order calling upon the commanders of regiments to make the necessary preparations for disbanding their corps, Captain Picton assembled the men in College Green Square, and read to them the instructions which he had received; bidding them at the same time to conform quietly and with readiness to the necessity of the case. Only a slight murmur of discontent was at first audible after the order to disembody the regiment had been read, the soldiers being probably awed by the presence of their officers; but these had no sooner retired than the men were guilty of the most mutinous and turbulent conduct, assembling together in a body, and entering into a general compact

upon oath not to give up their arms or obey the commands of their officers. Several other regiments were at this time in the city, and the most fearful apprehensions were entertained by the inhabitants lest the contagion should spread, and a disorderly soldiery be let loose upon them. Some officers of the Seventy-fifth were quickly upon the spot, who in vain exhorted the riotous assemblage to return to their duty, and submit to the commands of their superiors; telling them how useless their opposition must be, and how disgraceful it was to the character of British soldiers. But their efforts were vain, clamour drowned their voices, and their attempts to reason with the mutineers only drew upon themselves threats of personal violence.

Affairs were in this alarming state before information was brought to Captain Picton of any disorder having occurred; he then, however, hastened to the scene of confusion and tumult. Having singled out in an instant the most active of the mutineers, he drew his sword, and without a moment's hesitation rushed into the midst of them, seized him, and dragged him forth from amongst his

comrades, when he was immediately taken by some non-commissioned officers who had followed their captain, and placed under arrest. This decisive act daunted the prisoner's mutinous companions, and they saw him in silence led off to the guard-house. A few words from their captain, spoken in a tone which did not seem to admit of reply, or anything but obedience, now sent them at once to their barracks. By this intrepidity and resolution, which in moments of emergency distinguish a superior mind, the danger was at once averted, and the regiment suffered itself to be disbanded without another murmur.

Upon the report of these proceedings being made at the War Office, Captain Picton's spirited conduct became known to the King, who directed that the royal approbation should be communicated to Captain Picton for "the courage and true military spirit which he displayed in quelling the mutiny in the Seventy-fifth regiment." This was conveyed to him through the then Commander-in-chief, Field-marshal Conway, with a promise from that officer of the first vacant majority; but this message, as the sequel will prove, was the only

reward which Captain Picton ever received for this important service.

Upon the disbanding of his regiment, Captain Picton was placed upon half-pay, and retired into Pembrokeshire, where he enjoyed the affection and esteem of a numerous circle of relations and friends; and although it was much against his inclination that he thus early left his professional duties, and retired into private life, still he readily adapted himself to the novelty of his situation; for it must be remembered, that from the age of thirteen he had been a soldier, and consequently his recollections of home were only those of a boy. Thus far his career had been successful, but not very eventful. A captain at five-and-twenty is now considered in a fair way to the highest military rank which interest or merit can obtain for him. But Captain Picton was doomed to lose all the advantages which he had already gained in his early and rapid promotion. Fortune had never yet given him an opportunity of displaying those talents which he so unquestionably possessed; and those who were in authority naturally estimated the merits of an individual by the

services he had performed. After his regiment was disbanded, Sir Thomas Picton remained for the long period of twelve years on the half-pay list of captains.

We shall pass over this interval with but few remarks: the domestic circle of a country town offers few events worthy of being recorded. It is more than probable that, had there been any active hostilities in which Captain Picton could have taken a part, the natural bent of his disposition would have induced him to volunteer his services; but during nearly the whole of this time Europe was at peace. He was therefore more reconciled to the necessity of his situation, although he was constant in his applications to be placed on full-pay in some regiment ordered on foreign service. The unvarying reply of the gentlemen of the War Office was, an assurance that he would be appointed to the "earliest vacancy." But repeated disappointments convinced him at last, that an official promise is not always to be depended upon; and, after a few more unsuccessful efforts, he gave up the attempt.

His time was passed during this period of

inactivity, according to the statement of his brother, the Rev. Edward Picton, in "the enjoyment of the sports of the field, in studying the classics, but more particularly in perfecting himself in the art of war." He was now preparing himself for that career which was afterwards to become so well known, and which was destined to be productive of so much honour to himself and advantage to his country. Few biographies offer a better or more elevated example to the young soldier, of the advantages which he may obtain by improving his mind in the knowledge of his profession, than this of Sir Thomas Picton's domestic life. Some writer says, "that to feel great is to be great;" but without admitting the truth of this assertion in its full extent, it cannot be denied that men seldom become elevated above the level of their ambition. Captain Picton was at this time doubtless conscious that the abilities he possessed required only an opportunity of displaying themselves, in order to be appreciated; and while labouring to qualify himself to improve any such opportunity to the utmost, he was looking forward to the attainment of the highest honours of his profession.

In person Captain Picton was at this time tall and well-proportioned, approaching the athletic; his height about six feet one inch, and his features large but well formed. The natural expression of his face was stern and dignified; and his smile dispelled at once a repulsive expression which sometimes hung upon his brow. None who ever saw that smile could deny that it betokened a warm and generous heart. His eyes were brilliant and expressive; his voice sharp, and his manner of speaking quick and animated. He always commanded respect and attention, as the earnestness of his delivery and the power of his language impressed the hearer with conviction. But in the field, his tone of voice was totally altered; it was there full and deep; every word was calm and impressive, and its effect upon his soldiers was apparent in the increased confidence of their charge.

Picton, thus resolved to prepare himself for any rank in his profession to which Fortune might elevate him, applied with ardour to every pursuit which could possibly assist him in the

various duties he might be called upon to perform. It was during this long interval of privacy he laid the foundation of his after fame, and qualified himself to compete for a place among the heroes of his country.

CHAPTER II.

Unsuccessful attempts to obtain employment.—Embarks for the West Indies.—Joins Sir John Vaughan.—Made Deputy Quarter-Master-General.—Superseded by General Knox.—Introduction to Sir Ralph Abercromby.—Assists in the Capture of St. Lucia and St. Vincent.—Voyage to England and return to Martinique with Sir Ralph Abercromby.—Capture of Trinidad—Made Commandant.—Instructions from Sir Ralph Abercromby.

In February 1793, France commenced that extraordinary struggle against the nations of Europe, which, notwithstanding her internal discord, and the depopulating activity of the guillotine, she carried on with as much vigour and success as in her best and brightest days. The preparations for hostilities, and his strong desire for active service, induced Captain Picton to renew his applications to the Commander-in-chief for employment: but they were still unavailing; the same polite replies and general assurances were made to his letters, as formerly, and he was soon convinced that

interest, and nothing but interest, would obtain for him his wishes. Of this he had not much; and there would be little to surprise us in the circumstance had he turned with disgust from a profession in which he had such slender prospects of success. Fortunately, however, Captain Picton rightly considered that *his* present services gave him no particular claim for preferment; and this reconciled him in some degree to the disappointment which he had constantly to endure.

One whole year of hostilities was passed by Captain Picton in endeavours to obtain employment; when, tired of making applications, and hopeless of success, he resolved upon trying to procure for himself that which he had been so long seeking from others. Accordingly, towards the end of the year 1794, he embarked without any appointment for the West Indies, having no better prospect than a slight acquaintance with Sir John Vaughan, who had just been appointed commander-in-chief in that part of the globe. This step was probably the remote cause of Sir Thomas Picton's after fame; and to Sir John Vaughan England is probably indebted for the

important services afterwards rendered by the man whose abilities he discovered and employed. Sir John Vaughan at once appointed Captain Picton to the Seventeenth foot, making him at the same time his confidential aid-de-camp, by which he had a closer and more constant opportunity of discerning the activity of his disposition and the strength of his judgment. Captain Picton was now for the first time in active service, and so well pleased was his general with the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of his situation, that he quickly promoted him to a majority in the Sixty-eighth regiment, together with the appointment of deputy quarter-master-general, which entitled him to the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Fortune seemed thus inclined to recompense him for the length of time he had lost; and it will be perceived that when once Sir Thomas Picton had an opportunity of displaying the powers of his mind, his abilities were so highly appreciated, that he was never afterwards exposed to neglect; but, on the contrary, his life was passed in active and meritorious services. Sir John Vaughan held this important command for little more than one year,

when ill health compelled him to resign, and Colonel Picton had, a short time after this event, to regret the loss of his friend. He died at Martinique, in the month of August 1795.

Colonel Picton was continued at the head of the quarter-master-general's department, until superseded by General Knox, when he resolved upon returning to Europe, having little expectation of promotion or employment now that his patron was no more. Before, however, he could put his plans in execution, he was called upon by General Leigh, (who was at this period senior officer in the West Indies,) to assist him in receiving Sir Ralph Abercromby, upon the arrival of that gallant veteran at Barbadoes, to take the command in the place of the late Sir John Vaughan.

This was the first occasion upon which Major Picton had been personally introduced to Sir Ralph: the name was familiar to the general, through the knowledge which he possessed of his uncle; the merits of Major Picton were, however, totally unknown to Sir Ralph previously to this meeting; but it is probable that that discerning officer discovered at this

interview the superior powers and attainments of his new acquaintance. He received him in the most warm and friendly manner; and when, after Major Picton had in few words related his services, the situations he had held, and that, apprehensive of not being enabled to continue in active employment in the West Indies, he intended to return immediately to England; Sir Ralph took his hand, and in language as gratifying as it was unexpected, requested that he would continue with him during the ensuing campaign, hoping, as he observed, "to give him an opportunity of returning in a way more agreeable." This invitation was so flattering, and so much in accordance with Picton's desires, that he did not hesitate to accept it; and from this period until the death of Sir Ralph Abercromby, a mutual regard and esteem existed between these illustrious men, which no petty intrigue or professional jealousy could ever for a moment impair.

Immediately upon the arrival of Sir Ralph in the West Indies, he made every arrangement for active hostilities against such colonies as still remained in possession of the French.

The first place against which he directed his forces was St. Lucia, whither he was accompanied by Major Picton, not holding any command, but as one of his suite. Major Picton could not, however, remain an inactive spectator during the progress of the attack, and accordingly volunteered to occupy any post to which Sir Ralph might appoint him. In the attack upon this island he acted a zealous, although not a very distinguished part. His rank at this period was only major, for with the situation of deputy quarter-master-general he lost the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, and fell back into that which he actually held in the army. He had no recognised appointment in the force under Sir Ralph Abercromby: his services therefore, however individually meritorious, were not performed under circumstances which would warrant any specific mention of him by Sir Ralph in his public despatches. During the whole of the proceedings, he acted as a volunteer aid-de-camp to Sir Ralph, and, as was strongly testified by that able chief, obtained from him his warmest approbation for judgment and intrepidity.

On the 22nd of April, the troops destined for

the attack upon St. Lucia, sailed from Carlisle Bay, in the fleet commanded by Admiral Sir John Laforey, and arrived off Longville Bay the evening of the 26th, when Major-general Campbell was ordered immediately to disembark with seventeen hundred men; this he succeeded in doing, and took up a position for the night, without any further opposition than a few guns fired from the batteries on Pigeon Island. Early on the following morning he advanced upon Choc Bay, where the fleet had anchored during the night with the remainder of the troops; the moment the head of this column was perceived, the centre division of the army disembarked near the village of Choc, upon which a force of about five hundred men, which had been faintly and vainly resisting the advance of Major-general Campbell's corps, retired with precipitation to a spot called Morne Chabot, one of the strongest and most commanding situations in the neighbourhood.

As it was absolutely necessary to obtain possession of this fort before investing Morne Fortune, Sir Ralph Abercromby ordered an assault to be made during the night by two de-

tachments; the one commanded by Brigadier-general Hope, and the other by Brigadier-general Moore.* This attack was intended to be made upon two opposite sides at the same moment; and accordingly Brigadier-general Moore commenced his march with about five hundred men precisely at midnight, this detachment having to proceed by the most circuitous route; while Brigadier-general Hope, who had to follow a more direct path, delayed his departure for a short time longer, when he also, with about the same number of men, commenced his march.

The information upon which this expedition was planned had unfortunately been drawn entirely from ignorant or treacherous guides; and the calculation of time necessary for the two corps to perform the distance was consequently erroneous. Brigadier-general Moore's leading column suddenly fell in with an advanced picquet of the enemy at least an hour and a half earlier than was expected. Upon this occasion, the promptitude and decision of that distinguished officer were particularly conspicuous. Finding that his march was dis-

* Afterwards Sir John Moore.

covered, and that it was impossible to halt the troops, as from the narrowness of the path they were marching in single file, he at once resolved upon making the attack, without waiting for the co-operation of Brigadier-general Hope's division. The spirit of his men ably seconded his determination. Forming with as much expedition and regularity as the nature of the ground would admit, they pushed on with a resolution that was irresistible, and in a very short time carried the post at the point of the bayonet. Sir Ralph Abercromby observed in his despatch, that "Brigadier-general Hope's division marched with so much precision, that they arrived exactly at the time appointed; and, if fortunately the attack could have been executed as was directed, the whole force of the enemy would have fallen." The loss sustained by the French during this short but brilliant affair was between forty and fifty men killed, and two hundred stand of arms, with some ammunition, which were taken by the victors.

Active preparations were now made for the investment of Morne Fortune, where the

enemy had established himself in some force, having a garrison of about two thousand well-disciplined and well-affected coloured troops, some hundred whites, besides a number of black people who had flown thither for refuge. The difficulty of communication in this country rendered the proceedings more tedious than was at first imagined, while the operation of erecting batteries for the reduction of this fortress, was a work of constant labour and much danger.

During the progress of the siege, the enemy made several desperate sorties, but were invariably repulsed with considerable loss; although not without doing much injury to the besiegers. The rugged and mountainous character of the country rendered the progress of the siege slow, and its event doubtful; but the persevering disposition and endless resources of the English general overcame every obstacle. Every inch of ground was disputed by the defenders with both courage and skill, and nothing but the most indefatigable exertion and constant preparation for attack enabled the assailants to erect a battery on the mountainous ridge of Duchasseux, which in

a great measure commands the fortress. During this laborious operation, the officers and seamen of the fleet (which, Sir John Laforey having resigned the command, was now under the orders of Rear-admiral Sir Hugh Christian,) rendered the most important services in dragging up the guns, and transporting the ammunition up the steep and rugged ground over which it was necessary to convey it.

By incessant efforts day and night the besiegers were enabled to open a battery of eighteen guns on the 16th of May; but this being only on the first parallel, the further approaches were continued until the morning of the 24th, when three regiments were ordered to gain possession of a more advanced post. In this they were opposed in the most vigorous and resolute manner by the enemy; but the contest was not of long duration. Brigadier-general Moore led the assault with an energy which soon overcame all opposition; and the assailants succeeded in establishing themselves within about five hundred yards of the fort. Two batteries of eight guns were immediately commenced, and were to have been opened on the following morning; when, towards night,

the enemy, perceiving that further resistance would be futile, sent a flag of truce, demanding a suspension of hostilities until noon the following day. A truce was granted until eight o'clock the next morning, when the capitulation of the whole island ensued; and the garrison, to the number of two thousand, marched out and laid down their arms. The loss of the English during this short but laborious siege was five hundred and sixty-six killed, wounded, and missing, including several valuable and promising officers.

It would be impossible at this time to follow Major Picton through the different situations in which he was placed, and the services which he performed during this siege; but for a striking proof of the estimation in which his conduct was held by the general, it is only necessary to quote the following passage from the public orders issued by Sir Ralph Abercromby immediately after the subjugation of the island. In this he says, "that all orders coming through Lieutenant-colonel Picton shall be considered as the orders of the commander-in-chief." So decided a mark of approbation thus universally expressed to the

whole army must be interpreted as a strong testimony of the high opinion entertained of his merits; but, not contented with paying him this distinguished compliment, Sir Ralph, without solicitation upon his part, recommended him for the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Fifty-sixth regiment.

After having arranged with Major-general Nicholls an expedition against Grenada, Sir Ralph Abercromby proceeded in person with the rest of the troops, and accompanied by Lieutenant-colonel Picton, to attack the island of St. Vincent's. On the 7th of June, the fleet arrived off the island; but the soldiers were not disembarked until the evening of the eighth. Early the following morning they marched in one column by their right as far as Stubbs, about eight miles from Kingston, where they were formed into three divisions, and bivouacked for the night opposite to their places of attack. At daylight the next day, the assault on the forts was commenced, and continued with but little intermission and various success until the afternoon; the garrison continuing to make a determined resistance. The resolution of British troops

at length, however, prevailed: they were successful in every direction, and before four o'clock the English colours waved upon every position lately occupied by the enemy. In this well-contested struggle, of the English, one hundred and seventy-nine rank and file, besides officers, were killed or wounded.

Upon the termination of this short but brilliant campaign, Colonel Picton accompanied Sir Ralph Abercromby to Martinique, from whence, after remaining a short period, he sailed with him for Europe, in the Arethusa. During the whole of this voyage, and the short stay Sir Ralph made in England, Colonel Picton and he were on the most friendly and intimate terms; and he was often in after years heard to speak of this period of his life as one of unalloyed pleasure. It was not only the great strength of mind and general information possessed by Sir Ralph Abercromby which made Colonel Picton recall with so much satisfaction the hours he had passed in his society, but he always expressed himself as deeply indebted to that experienced soldier for some lessons upon military tactics, which he never forgot, and which he was afterwards

enabled to apply. He was therefore justly called one of Sir Ralph Abercromby's pupils, and he was proud of the appellation. There never was a better master, while few scholars ever attained so near to the perfection of their tutor.

After a stay in England of not more than two months, during which time Colonel Picton was constantly with his kind patron, he again sailed with Sir Ralph for the West Indies, and without any incident worthy of remark arrived, near the end of January 1797, at Martinique. An expedition against Trinidad had for some time been determined on; and shortly after the return of the commander-in-chief to the West Indies, he made the necessary arrangements with Admiral Harvey to proceed at once to the capture of that valuable island. The Spaniards had long been in expectation of an attack; and had collected four ships of the line and several frigates for their defence, which were moored in a bay under the protection of some batteries of considerable strength.

On the evening of the 16th of February the English squadron arrived off this bay;

when the admiral, having observed the position of the Spanish fleet, ordered preparations to be made for an early attack on the following morning. During the night, however, flames were perceived bursting from one of their ships, which spread with so much rapidity, that in a short time the whole were consumed, with the exception of one line-of-battle ship, which contrived to escape the conflagration, but was captured by the boats of the British fleet. After this disaster, which was said to have been produced by accident, the enemy was not in a condition to make any effectual resistance; and when Sir Ralph Abercromby landed his troops in the morning, he was permitted to march into Puerto de Espagna, the principal town, almost unopposed. The governor requested permission to treat; which being granted, and the terms agreed to, the whole island was surrendered to Great Britain without any further resistance.

The reduction of Trinidad was one of the most important events in the life of Picton, since in its consequences it threw a shadow not only over his living fortunes, but even over his memory.

In our relation of the circumstances out of which the accusations afterwards brought against him arose, we shall adhere strictly to the facts of the case: a simple statement of these will be his best and his sufficient vindication. Almost the first act of Sir Ralph Abercromby after obtaining possession of Trinidad, was to appoint Colonel Picton governor and commandant of his new conquest; a mark of approbation which he had never ventured to solicit, and which was therefore quite unexpected.

Sir Ralph Abercromby made but a short stay at this island; but during the short time he was there, he saw enough to convince him that the duties which Colonel Picton would have to perform were very arduous. He was constantly beset by a crowd of complainants against the corruption and cupidity of the administrators of justice; and a few days before his departure from the island, while giving Colonel Picton some additional instructions, he observed: "I have placed you in a trying and delicate situation,—nor, to give you any chance of overcoming the difficulties opposed to you, can I leave you a strong garrison; but I shall give you ample powers: *execute Spanish law as well*

as you can; do justice according to your conscience, and that is all that can be expected from you. His Majesty's government will be minutely informed of your situation, and, no doubt, will make all due allowances."

On the 25th of February, Sir Ralph Abercromby sailed from Trinidad, having previously drawn up with his own hand the following code of "instructions" for the guidance of Colonel Picton and Chief-Justice Nicholl in administering the laws of the colony.

"INSTRUCTIONS.

"General Sir Ralph Abercromby, K.B.

"Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's Forces in the Windward and Leeward Charibbee Islands, &c.&c.

"The island of Trinidad having submitted to his Majesty's arms, by the power and authority vested in me, by these presents I nominate you, John Nicholl, Esq. to be chief judge and auditor (during his Majesty's pleasure) over all and every part of the said island; and you are hereby required and commanded to perform and execute all manner of things appertaining to the aforesaid offices, conformably to the instructions and powers you shall

receive from me through the Lieutenant-colonel Picton, whom I have appointed governor of the said island, and whose instructions and powers are to be considered of equal force as if given under my hand. And as there was no stipulation (in the capitulation) in favour of the Spanish laws in the administration of justice, and as they were merely continued by my circular letter to the commandants of quarters, magistrates, &c. in order to avoid the confusion which might result from too strict an adherence to the forms of the jurisprudence under an English government, you will receive particular instructions from Lieutenant-colonel Picton explanatory of my intentions. And as I have judged it expedient to suspend from his employment the assessor-general, and not to name any one to fill that office in his stead, you are ordered to proceed in all causes, whether civil or criminal, without any assessor, although it may be contrary to the form and spirit of the Spanish laws. And I hereby declare that all sentences given and signed by you without the accompaniment of an assessor, shall have the same force and validity as if they were so accompanied, and shall be

executed in the same common and ordinary form.

"And as I have received serious complaints of the extortions practised by the exactions of excessive fees, and the mal-applications of useless and unnecessary proceedings in the administration of justice, by the escrivanos, attorneys, &c. you are hereby required to shorten and simplify the proceedings, and to terminate all causes in the most expeditious and least expensive manner that the circumstances of them will admit, according to the dictates of your conscience, the best of your abilities, and conformably to the instructions you shall receive from Lieutenant-colonel Picton, although it should be contrary to the usual practice of the Spanish government. And I also give you full power and authority to suspend from their employments all escrivanos, attorneys, or other officers, who shall be guilty of extortions, contumacy, or contravention of your decrees.

"In all civil causes, the parties are to be allowed an appeal from your tribunal to the King in council when the matter in litigation exceeds 500*l.* sterling; and in all criminal

"causes the appeal is to the governor, and no sentence to be executed until approved of by him.

"Given under my hand and seal, in the Port of Spain, island of Trinidad, this first day of March, in the year 1797.

(Signed) "R. ABERCROMBY.

"By order of his Excellency,

"FREDERICK MAITLAND,

Secretary."

CHAPTER III.

Sir Ralph Abercromby's opinion of Colonel Picton.—Picton's Enemies.—Letter from General Maitland.—Nature of the trust reposed in Colonel Picton as Governor of Trinidad. — His first act in that office. — Address from the Inhabitants. — Don Christoval de Robles. — His recommendation to Colonel Picton. — State of Trinidad when he was appointed to the Government.—Impulse to desertion subdued.—Preparations by the Spaniards to regain possession of the Colony. — Unprotected State of the Coast. — Improvement in the aspect of affairs.

"Colonel Picton, if I knew any officer who in my opinion would discharge the duties annexed to the situation better than you, to him would I have given it; there are no thanks due to me:" such were the words of that great and good man Sir Ralph Abercromby, when Colonel Picton waited upon him to express his acknowledgments for the honour which he had received in being appointed to the government of Trinidad,—words which, coming from one whose judgment and abilities were the admiration even of those who were jealous of his fame, must

have been as flattering to the individual, as they ought to have been convincing to the world, of the propriety of the person selected for the important duties which he had to perform. No language could possibly have been more flattering, as it must have conveyed a pleasing conviction to the mind of Colonel Picton that it was his own merit alone, and no friendly intervention, which obtained for him the distinguished preference; and after so strong a pledge of confidence it is but reasonable to suppose that he would endeavour still to merit that high estimation which Sir Ralph had thus strikingly expressed, by every exertion in his power to fulfil the duties of the trust to his satisfaction.

The enemies of Picton, when they afterwards inveighed against him as "*un homme antique en scélératesse,*"—and when, speaking of his actions, they declared that, "excepting Danton and some of his coadjutors under Robespierre, there are no instances in modern times of similar atrocity,"—made as direct a charge against the discernment of Sir Ralph, as they did against the character of the man he had honoured with his confidence. But Aber-

cromby's character was too well known to bear such an imputation: to give colour to their calumnies, they were obliged to deny that the general had given Colonel Picton the appointment upon his own judgment; they insisted that it had been bestowed upon him at the earnest solicitation of Brigadier-general Maitland. But the degree of truth with which this statement was made cannot be more satisfactorily shown than by the following letter from that officer to Colonel Picton.

"Barbadoes, August 24th, 1804.

"DEAR PICTON,

"I have seen it asserted in a late publication, that I obtained the government of Trinidad for you: it appears also that you have publicly said that it was offered to you. On my part I declare, that you were not indebted for that appointment to any interest which I made with Sir Ralph Abercromby, for I made none to that end.

"The observation that your knowledge of the Spanish language was a peculiar advantage to you in that situation, I certainly have frequently made, and I believe did make about

the time of your appointment; but whether I made this remark to Sir Ralph or not, (which at this distance of time I can neither affirm nor deny,) of this I am clear, that I made no interest to obtain the government for you.

"When it is known that you were in Sir Ralph's suite (though you held no situation, you lived in his family,) from January 1796 until your appointment at Trinidad, within which period you made two voyages with him in his Majesty's ship Arethusa, Captain Wolley, the one from the West Indies to England, and the other from England to the West Indies; that during these voyages you (I may say we) lived, and even slept, in the same cabin with the general; I am persuaded that no person will hesitate to acknowledge that the general had a thorough opportunity to form his own judgment of you, and that from his opinion, thence formed, is evidently traced the cause which led him to appoint you to be commandant at Trinidad: for if this be not just, then it follows, either that he had formed *no* opinion of you at all, or that he appointed you *contrary* to his own opinion; which, when applied to the actions of Sir Ralph Abercromby, I believe

everybody will say, in the language of geometricians, is absurd.

"I am always, my dear Picton,

"Yours, with the greatest regard,

"FREDERICK MAITLAND."

"Colonel Thomas Picton."

This letter declares at once the honest reasons which induced Sir Ralph Abercromby to select Colonel Picton for this important post. He had had a long-continued opportunity of seeing and judging his character; the impression on his mind was favourable, and therefore he gave him the appointment. It was unnecessary after the production of this letter to adduce further argument that Sir Ralph Abercromby nominated Colonel Picton commandant of Trinidad *for no other reason and from no other motive* than that he considered him qualified in every respect for the duties of the situation. The accusers of Colonel Picton were therefore driven to assert that he had by a long course of duplicity deceived Sir Ralph into the belief of his efficiency, and thereby abused the generous confidence of the general: but even this position is untenable; for it does not appear that, to

the hour of his death, Sir Ralph ever expressed himself in any degree disappointed or deceived in the opinion which he had formed of Colonel Picton; neither was he ever heard to censure any of his acts as governor of Trinidad. On the contrary, after having revisited the colony in the month of June, he expressed his "entire and complete approbation of Colonel Picton's conduct," and in consequence recommended him strongly in his subsequent despatches as "an officer in every respect qualified to fill the important situation of governor of the island." Any further evidence would be superfluous in order to show the estimation in which Sir Ralph Abercromby held the character and abilities of Colonel Picton.

In the instructions from his Majesty's government to Sir Ralph Abercromby, relative to the attack on the island of Trinidad is the following remark:

"The island of Trinidad is pointed out as the source of great mischief to the British islands, being a shelter for privateers who annoy their trade, and affords an asylum for bad people of every description, who man the privateers and row-boats, which make depreda-

tions upon the coasts, carrying off slaves and property: it is therefore recommended to Sir Ralph Abercromby, if he can collect a sufficient force without exposing the British islands, to make an attack upon Trinidad, and if the force he can spare should not be sufficient to keep possession after he has taken it, to make the attack notwithstanding, for the purpose of destroying or carrying away all military stores and arms that he may find there, and to seize upon and to send to England the brigands and mischievous people who have made that island their home."

This at one view displays the nature of the trust reposed in Colonel Picton. After Sir Ralph had taken possession of the island, he, with that kind feeling and consideration which ever distinguished him, granted to the inhabitants the exercise of their own laws, and the institutions which subsisted previously to the capitulation.

When Colonel Picton first entered upon the duties of his appointment, the amount of the population was 17,718; and it will be shown in reply to the accusations brought against him, whether the administration of the laws

under his government tended to give confidence to settlers, or, as his accusers strongly and pertinaciously asserted, compelled those who were already located to fly from his "*oppressive domination, machinations, and delinquencies.*"

The first act of Colonel Picton was to discover the actual condition of the island, and to ascertain how far the extract already given from Sir Ralph Abercromby's instructions was borne out by the character of the people. He was greatly assisted in these inquiries by the respectable part of the population, who voluntarily came forward to give such information as they were enabled to impart; and a short time after he had been appointed to the governorship, he received the following address from the inhabitants.

"ADDRESS.

"To his Excellency THOMAS PICTON, Esq. Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Island of Trinidad, &c. &c.

"May it please your Excellency,

"The last governor of this colony for his Catholic Majesty, perhaps too much occupied

in the last moments of the reduction of the island, obtained from the conqueror, by the capitulation, the ratification of all the acts previously passed under the Spanish government, but forgot to demand the continuation of our laws; a thing the more necessary, as the establishment of new ones, however good they might be, might occasion the greatest disorder. This inconvenience could not escape the penetration of his Excellency Sir Ralph Abercromby, (whose humanity and disinterestedness cannot be sufficiently praised,) and in the course of a few days after the capitulation he was pleased to issue a proclamation, declaring this favourable resolution;—which increased, if possible, the gratitude of the inhabitants of this island, already so much indebted to him for the wise measures he adopted at the conquest, to preserve them from the horrors attendant on war.

"The zeal which your excellency has invariably displayed for the preservation of the colony, and the welfare of its inhabitants, has insured you for ever their confidence, and induces them to take the liberty of laying before you some observations, which they think of consequence towards securing to them, until the peace, the

possession of their property, for the preservation of which you have proved your anxiety.

"That assemblage of men of justice, the majority of whom no doubt presented instances of corruption of which no other colony could furnish examples, and whose iniquities and horrors have exceeded those of every government known to us, have brought all but ruin on the inhabitants:- those shameful and permanent violations of all the laws of the Indies, and others of the kingdom, by which his Catholic Majesty intended that we should be governed, (laws full of wisdom and foresight,) and which would undoubtedly have ensured our happiness, if their administrators had been men of ordinary honesty, were wholly perverted. Murders and robberies were committed with impunity; widows and orphans despoiled; inheritances plundered; creditors and debtors equally ruined in affairs of the most simple nature; unfortunate colonists, scarcely arrived at the moment of enjoying the fruits of long and painful labours, which would have afforded the means of existence to their families, were devoured without pity on the most trifling discussion, like victims fattened only for that

purpose! In short, who can deny that these disorders had increased to such a degree, that a man destitute of employment or property might attempt anything against a proprietor; because the latter, convinced beforehand of the usurpation of part of his property, and of the loss of the remainder by the excessive costs of justice, would have rather submitted to the most violent assaults in his house and on his person, than have offered any resistance to them?

"Such was the dismal but faithful picture of the colony at the period of its conquest; and that peace which it enjoyed, (which alone had contributed to attract that multitude of exiles who had been forced to fly from the civil wars which raged in the neighbouring islands,) that peace of which they so highly applauded the advantages, was sold to us at the price of being devoured in the den of chicanery, if any difficulty obliged us to have recourse to justice; whilst our administrators, in their despatches to the court of Madrid, attributed the rapid and unexpected increase of population to the effects of a wise and virtuous administration. We have not thought necessary to give your excellency a detail of

the numerous acts just mentioned. You were not long at the head of this government without obtaining a perfect knowledge of them, in consequence of the necessity imposed upon you to pursue the affairs of justice already commenced. What was your astonishment on beholding such infamy, and how often have you expressed your indignation thereon! Yes, sir, we will say, that penetrated with the misfortunes of several persons who could not escape the claws of these vultures, your excellency wished to relieve them; but how could it be effected, if with that intent you are obliged to have recourse to several of the same men of whom we complain, whose interest it is to support each other, and to bury in darkness what we are desirous of making known to the world?

"The zeal and anxiety which your excellency has manifested for the good of this colony can only meet with the success you so well deserve by assenting to the request that we now presume to make, for the establishment of a superior tribunal erected in the following manner, or in any other that your excellency may judge most expedient.

"Signed by a great majority of the respectable inhabitants, natives of all countries."*

Having ascertained that the opinion which the government at home had expressed of the character of the inhabitants of this island was far from undeserved, Colonel Picton felt himself in a position which might have intimidated a man of less resolution; but he, with that energy by which he was distinguished, immediately applied himself to discover the root of the existing evil, and the most effective means for its extermination. Amongst those who had been recommended to him as intimately acquainted with the internal state of the country, was an old gentleman, named Don Christoval de Robles, who had for nearly half a century been holding important situations in the administration of the colony. Colonel Picton readily availed himself of the advice of this person; and he in a short time sent to the governor the following document, which was so perfectly in accordance with his own ob-

* The mixed character of these memorialists, and their ignorance of the English language, account for the whimsical manner in which this document is worded.

servations, and the statements of the other respectable inhabitants to whom he was referred, that Colonel Picton enclosed the original paper in his despatches, to show at one view the actual state of the island.

"DON CHRISTOVAL DE ROBLES' RECOMMENDATION TO COLONEL PICTON.

"As you have done me the honour of consulting me, I will give you my honest and candid sentiments on the situation of this colony.

"The population is mostly composed of refugees and desperate characters, who have been implicated in the rebellions and massacres of all the neighbouring islands; their principles are incompatible with all regular government, and their inveteracy to your nation is irreconcilable. The timidity of the former government suffered their crimes to pass unpunished; and at your arrival they were actually masters of the island. You may judge of the numbers capable of bearing arms, by the application of the French consul to the governor, on the appearance of the British fleet, when he offered him the assistance of three thousand repub-

licans, which, not being inclined to make any resistance, he thought proper to decline.

"To those you may add the Spanish peons, or people of colour,—a set of vagabonds, who casually come over from the continent, and who are ready to join in any disorder that affords a prospect of plunder; and a great proportion of the slaves, who have been sent here from the other islands for crimes dangerous to their safety. These people are now apparently quiet; but they are the more dangerous, as they are only waiting for a favourable opportunity to show themselves. They are studying you and your garrison.

"A considerable portion of your troops, if one may draw a conclusion from their conversation and conduct, are not well affected, and may be easily seduced; and those people will leave no means untried to effect it. If you do not give an imposing character to your government before the climate diminishes the number of your soldiers, your situation will become alarming. If those men do not fear you, they will despise you; and you may easily foresee the consequences. They have been accustomed to a timid and temporising

government; a few acts of vigour may disconcert their projects. But, perhaps, you expect some co-operation from the magistrates and tribunals: — allow yourself no longer to be deceived; there is not a sufficient confidence in the duration of your government to induce any one to commit himself by a vigorous application to the law. They are all apprehensive of returning under the dominion of their old masters, and will be careful not to expose themselves. They are, besides, people of weak and timid characters, from whom no energy can be expected. There is but one line of conduct by which you can extricate yourself from all these difficulties.

"The circumstances of the conquest have virtually combined in you the whole power of the government. You are supreme political, criminal, civil, and military judge. You unite in your own person the separate powers of the governor, tribunals, and royal audience of Caraccas: our laws enable you to judge summarily, without recusation or appeal. Circumstances like the present have been foreseen by our lawyers, who have provided remedies equal to the occasion. You are not shackled by forms or modes of prosecution. If you do

substantial justice, you are only answerable to God and your conscience."

The following extract from the laws of Grenada shows that De Robles was not singular in his estimation of the character of the people of Trinidad.

"And whereas some persons have come from Trinidad, and lurked in these islands for the purpose of seducing and carrying off slaves; and other persons residing in Trinidad have sent artful negro or mulatto slaves for the like purpose; and it is but just and reasonable to proceed against those who reside on the very spot *which holds out a retreat for fraudulent debtors and stealers of slaves, and where no redress or justice can be had.*" This act then goes on to enact, "That all persons *coming from Trinidad* shall give bond on their arrival in one thousand pounds sterling, to be of good behaviour; and if such bond is not given, such person to be declared a *vagabond, and, without any other proof than that of usual or frequent residence in Trinidad, to be committed to gaol.*" *

* Laws of Grenada, vol. iii. page 232, clause 8.

Such was the state of Trinidad when Colonel Picton was appointed to the government. It must be evident, from the preceding extracts, that severe measures only could enable him to keep possession of a place, the inhabitants of which were composed of such heterogeneous and lawless materials. The means at his disposal for this purpose were, however, but very inadequate to the difficulty of the object. The following statement of the military establishment at this period is from a return made by Colonel Picton to the commander-in-chief :—

"The Fifty-seventh regiment cannot bring into the field above . . .	300
"Hompesch's detachment (composed entirely of foreigners, and possessing very little of my confidence) . . .	100
"Soter's French negroes (chiefly picked up in the island) . . .	100
"Artillery	20
"Total effectives .	520

Inadequate as this force was, even for the protection of the most vulnerable points round the island, it was not to be supposed that any

reduction could be made from the military posts in order to perform the duties of police. Still, had these troops been well affected and disciplined, or had they been all British soldiers, the activity and resolution of Colonel Picton might have compensated for the deficiency in their numbers; but, according to the remarks made in his despatches, it appears that the foreigners were "constantly deserting, or bordering on mutiny, through the insidious representations of disaffected persons, employed, it was supposed, by the Spanish government for that purpose."

In one of his earliest letters to Sir Ralph Abercromby, a short time subsequent to his appointment, he says: "The only inquietude we have experienced, has been occasioned by the deserters, most of them Germans." Again, he adds: "I have been under the necessity of calling Hompesch's into town, to be immediately under my own inspection. A very great spirit of insubordination prevails in that corps; and, I am sorry to say, the officers (with the exception of the major, who is unfortunately ill) use no endeavours to repress it. They report ten deserted with their arms, &c.; but,

I very much fear, they exceed that number. However, I believe it is put an end to for the present; for in consequence of a circular letter I addressed to the different commandants of quarters, publishing a reward of sixteen dollars for each one apprehended or killed, five have been brought in, and one, who had written a letter to his comrades, saying he was at the head of five hundred men, has already suffered."

The powers vested in Colonel Picton by the commander-in-chief, themselves prove the high opinion which that distinguished individual entertained of his discretion and judgment. Chief Justice Nicholl was directed "*to cŏnsider his instructions and powers as of equal force as if given under Sir Ralph's own hand;*" while, "in all criminal causes," the appeal was directed to be made "to the governor," and "no sentence was to be executed until approved of by him."

It will thus be seen that Colonel Picton was invested with authority to execute the most summary and extreme civil and military punishments, without reference to any other tribunal. The necessity for this, however, cannot be

doubted; nor can the use which he in this instance made of that authority be condemned. In the British army, desertion in time of war is always and necessarily punished with death. Colonel Picton made an early example of the mutinous ringleaders,—an act rather of mercy than severity; by which, and placing the detachment under his own immediate inspection, he succeeded in bringing the men back to a sense of duty and subordination.

As soon as the first impulse to desertion had been subdued, Colonel Picton endeavoured by more gentle measures to convince the disaffected, that the way to obtain redress for either real or imaginary wrongs, was not by subverting military discipline, or opposition to the laws; and in a letter addressed to Sir Ralph Abercromby, only thirteen days after his appointment to the government, he says, "By his Majesty's ship Pelican, I send to head-quarters five deserters from Brigadier-general Hompesch's regiment. It was not my intention to have troubled your excellency with any of them; but as they complain of a want of justice, and say that their never having been accounted with has been the reason of their

desertion, I could not think of proceeding against them in a summary manner."

While this mutinous spirit was manifested by the troops, and disaffection pervaded the island, constant preparations were made by the Spanish government, from without, to regain possession of their colony. The undaunted mind and sound judgment of Colonel Picton were not, however, intimidated or impaired by the critical situation in which he was placed; and perhaps at no period of his after life did he display more discretion, fortitude, and activity, than while fulfilling the duties of this important post. With extraordinary tact he contrived to obtain the co-operation and cement the confidence of the respectable and well-affected portion of the inhabitants, who were at once embodied in the form of militia; by which his own inadequate force of British troops was made disposable for the protection of the island from external foes; and in a subsequent letter to Sir Ralph Abercromby, dated April 4th, he observes: "A very exact police has been established in the town, and is gradually extending itself over

the whole island. We are getting through the press of undecided processes as fast as we can. The colony is everywhere quiet, and the inhabitants pay prompt obedience to the orders of government."

It will thus be seen that, in little more than one month from his appointment, he had overcome many of the existing dangers, and succeeded in placing the captured island, if not in a position of security, at least in one of great improvement. Constant anxiety and indefatigable exertion were the means by which this was effected. In every letter to the commander-in-chief he reminds him of the totally unprotected state of the coast for want of a small naval force; and in one of these communications he remarks, "The north-east coast, from Toque to Mayero and Greaya, continues to be much annoyed by French privateers. A twelve-gun schooner, and another of a smaller class, continue to hover about these parts; and there is little doubt but that they communicate with the disaffected, and probably supply them with arms. The respectable inhabitants make very serious representations of their unprotected and

exposed situation; and say they shall be under the necessity of abandoning their homes, unless some naval protection be afforded them."

Colonel Picton did not relax in his endeavours to regulate the affairs of this island. His efforts were gradually successful; and when he had been only six months in possession of the government, he could report an improvement in the aspect of affairs there which must have been far beyond the expectations of all who knew the condition of the island when entrusted to his care. The following is a copy of his letter to the authorities at home.

"Port of Spain, 26th July, 1797.

"SIR,

"His Majesty's ship Dictator being ordered to Martinique, I profit by the occasion (the intercourse with England being more direct) to acquaint you with the situation of this island. The most perfect tranquillity and good-humour prevail throughout the colony; and the inhabitants of all classes acknowledge that their situation has been much ameliorated under the influence and protection of his Majesty's government.

"Since his Excellency Sir Ralph Abercromby has authorized me to arm launches for the protection of the intercourse with the neighbouring Spanish provinces, that trade has experienced a very great increase; and the market for British manufactures has become very considerable, and is daily increasing. Plantation provisions of all kinds are so plentiful as to enable me to permit the exportation of them to Grenada and St. Vincent's, which have lately suffered great distress from a discontinuance of the usual small supplies from America," &c.

"To the Right Hon. H. Dundas."

CHAPTER IV.

Fatal Effects of the Rainy Season. — Frustration of a Conspiracy.—Estimation by his Majesty's Government of Colonel Picton's exertions. — His Views as to further Conquests on the Continent adjacent to Trinidad. — Curious passage in Picton's Correspondence relative to the Battle of the Nile.—Cruisers sent to protect the Trade of Trinidad. — Proposed Reward for Colonel Picton's Head.— His amusing Letters on this subject.—Spanish Inhabitants of Trinidad averse to the Restoration of the Colony to the Mother Country. — Correspondence on the subject.

THE first rainy season proved alarmingly fatal to the small force under the command of Colonel Picton; and he says, in a letter dated October 25th, "The number of rank and file sick in hospital and quarters amount to five hundred and thirty-seven:" while at this and subsequent periods, demonstrations of attack were being constantly made by the Governor of Caraccas; but which the disturbed state of that city fortunately averted. About November, however, an attempt of a desperate and extensive nature was made by the coloured inha-

bitants of Trinidad (who were mostly French, and had ever been disaffected,) to bring about a revolution. This conspiracy had been long suspected by Colonel Picton, and he had taken every precaution to render it abortive. A number of refugees had collected on the opposite coast of Paria, who were to pass over and join their friends in the island with arms and ammunition; these were dispersed, and their stores and habitations destroyed, by a force sent against them, at the same time that the ringleaders of the insurgents on the island were seized and brought to trial; when, in the words of Colonel Picton, "by the immediate execution of one of the principals, and the imprisonment of several others, the remainder were overawed, and led to see the futility of their designs."

As a strong proof of the high sense in which his exertions were held by his Majesty's government, in March 1798 he received a letter from the Right Hon. H. Dundas, informing him, that "his Majesty had been graciously pleased, in consideration of the extraordinary expense attending the civil and military command of the island, to order that an allowance of one thousand two hundred pounds per annum

should be made to the commandant, with authority to charge that sum against the revenues of the island."

Colonel Picton, in one of his despatches, seems to acknowledge another and more formal testimony of the satisfaction his conduct gave. He writes—

"His Majesty's gracious approbation of my humble endeavours to promote the interest and honour of his government in this island, which you have so handsomely conveyed to me in your despatch of the 14th of January, is particularly flattering; and I am highly sensible of the honour, which I shall endeavour to merit by continuing to pursue similar measures with increased zeal."

Such testimonies of approbation were, it will readily be believed, highly gratifying to Colonel Picton; and he continued by unremitting exertions still further to advance the interests of the colony. In a subsequent letter he remarks, "The roads, though nearly impracticable when his Majesty's arms took possession of the island, are now the finest in the West Indies; and, upon the whole, the face of the country is undergoing a very flattering change."

But his attention was not confined exclusively to Trinidad: he was for a long time studying the character and political security of the neighbouring continent, which, as one of the richest and most fertile countries in the world, held out an alluring prospect to an enemy. The result of his inquiries was so perfectly in accordance with the general report, that he was constantly urging both his Majesty's government and the various commanders of the forces in the West Indies, to attempt to annex these fertile provinces to the British dominions; but although he was convinced that the conquest of the whole country might be effected with but little difficulty or expense, his applications were unavailing.

One letter in particular, addressed to Lieutenant-general Cuyler, the then commander-in-chief in the West Indies, sets forth so clearly, and in such glowing terms, the value of this conquest, and the facility with which it might be effected, that it is inserted in the Appendix for the perusal of the reader. Regardless, however, of his constant representations to this effect, the government were

either too supine, or too much engaged already, to undertake any enterprise in this quarter of the world: the opportunity was allowed to pass; and these provinces remained undisturbed in the possession of Spain until the peace which was shortly afterwards concluded.

There is a curious passage in Colonel Picton's correspondence of this time. He had just heard the first rumour of the battle of the Nile. He says,—

"A vessel, which left Glasgow on the 3rd of October, brings provincial papers of the 2nd, by which it appears that there is great reason to believe that Sir Horatio Nelson had at length discovered the retreat of Bonaparte's fleet on the coast of Egypt, but not at Alexandria; and that an attack had been made upon it, which terminated highly favourably to his Majesty's arms. If so, the hero of Italy will appear more like a refugee than a conqueror; and probably terminate his golden dreams amongst the sands of Asia."

Colonel Picton was no prophet; but, although he was mistaken in deducing its consequences, he felt all an Englishman's exultation when he received the news of Nelson's brilliant achievement. He writes again,—

"The victory gained by Sir Horatio Nelson, whether considered singly, or with respect to the events it will probably produce, must be regarded as the most brilliant and important that has ever graced our naval annals. England is yet in a proud situation, with the eyes and hopes of the whole world upon her; and she may now look forward to a period when her voice will be heard and respected."

In the beginning of the year 1779, Admiral Harvey, who was then in command of the fleet in the West Indies, sent some small cruisers to protect the trade which Colonel Picton had established with the continent. With these, under the command of Captain Dixon, of his Majesty's sloop Victorieux, he destroyed the batteries which had been erected to intercept the traffic of some of the smaller rivers. The removal of these obstructions, and the confidence which traders now reposed in his power and willingness to protect them, directed much of the commerce of the neighbouring continent to this island; and rendered it so formidable a rival to the Spanish possessions on the main, that the Governors of Caraccas and Guayana offered a reward of twenty thousand dollars for his, its Governor's, head.

Colonel Picton had for some time before this been in friendly communication with these officers, respecting the exchange of prisoners; mutual efforts were made to ameliorate the horrors of war, and to afford protection to private individuals. In a letter to the Governor of Caraccas he remarks, "I shall have great pleasure in facilitating your excellency's benevolent intentions respecting the unfortunate individuals whom the fortune of war has separated from their homes, their families, and their friends; and will most sincerely co-operate in every measure that may conduce to an event not less interesting to my humanity than to your excellency's." While, in a similar communication to the Governor of Guayana, he adds, "The nations which we represent are not naturally inimical; but the pressure of imperious circumstances and extraordinary events have produced a war, the asperities to individuals resulting from which I shall have great happiness in co-operating with your excellency to soften and alleviate."

Of course this liberal offer for the head of Colonel Picton, could not be interpreted as a proof of increased good feeling on the part of

these gentlemen; but, as he was not desirous of giving them any additional offence, or appearing at all hurt by this public announcement of the value in which he was held, he returned for answer the following piquant and amusing notes.

"Trinidad, 25th January 1799.

"SIR,

"Your excellency has highly flattered my vanity by the very handsome value which you have been pleased to fix upon my head. Twenty thousand dollars is an offer which would not discredit your royal master's munificence!

"As the trifle has had the good fortune to recommend itself to your excellency's attention, come and take it, and it will be much at your service: in expectation of which, I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

(Signed) "THOMAS PICTON."

"His Excellency, Don Pedro Carbonelli,
"Governor-general, Caraccas."

And to the Governor of Guayana, the following:—

"Port of Spain, 25th January 1799.

"SIR,

"I understand your excellency has done me the honour of valuing my head at twenty thousand dollars. I am sorry it is not in my power to return the compliment. Modesty obliges me to remark that your excellency has far over-rated the trifle; but, as it has found means to recommend itself to your excellency's attention, if you will give yourself the trouble of coming to take it, it will be much at your service.

"Your excellency's very devoted

"humble servant,

(Signed) "THOMAS PICTON."

"The Governor of Guayana."

But Colonel Picton's personal strength and courage were too well known: even this tempting offer was not sufficient to induce any of the bad characters who at this time infested the island to undertake the desperate task of gaining possession of his head. The interpretation which was afterwards put upon this uncivilized proclamation is a singular instance of the facility with which the most

atrocious acts will be adopted and defended by men who are prejudiced against the subject of them. This very act of the two governors of the Spanish provinces was afterwards held up to the British nation as a laudable measure, provoked by the gross exactions and cruelties perpetrated by Colonel Picton on their subjects who traded to Trinidad. No conduct on Colonel Picton's part could remove the infamy of this transaction: but, so far from the excuse given being founded in fact, at this very period the familiar appellation by which he was known amongst the South American Spaniards was, "El Tio," *the uncle or friend.*

In consequence of the brilliant successes of the British arms towards the end of the year 1799, the Spanish inhabitants of Trinidad became apprehensive of a peace, and that the island would be again restored to the mother country in exchange for Porto Rico or some other equivalent. Alarmed at this probability, an address was presented to Colonel Picton by the most respectable inhabitants, calling upon him to make a strong representation to the British government of the frightful situation in which the colony would be placed if again

put under the dominion of the Spanish crown. Colonel Picton was at the same time requested to address Sir Ralph Abercromby, to whom the whole colony still looked up as their conqueror and patron, calling upon him to protect them from the bloody persecution which those who had shown the least favour to the conquerors had every reason to expect if again in the power of the most *vindictive* and *revengeful* government in the world. Conformably to the wishes of the inhabitants, he immediately addressed the Right Honourable H. Dundas and Sir Ralph Abercromby upon the subject; and as these communications show in a very eminent degree his strong powers of discernment, and admirably illustrate the still unchanged character of the Spanish nation, they will be perused with interest. To Mr. Dundas he says—

"*Private.*

"Port of Spain, Trinidad,
"24th October 1799.

"SIR,

"Some very strong and earnest representations, made by the most respectable inhabitants of this colony respecting the unjustifiable and alarming conduct of the government of Carac-

cas, occasion this letter. If the island of Trinidad should be restored to Spain at a peace, we must resign all hope of ever being well received by the natives of South America. Those inhabitants of this island who have expressed any satisfaction with his Majesty's government, or have paid any personal attention to his representative, are known to be already prejudged and marked out as victims for the vengeance of the Spanish government whenever chance or circumstances may subject them to its jealous tyranny.

"The Spaniards who recollect the conduct of their government subsequent to the peace of 1763, upon the restoration of the Havannah, when common acts of civility and attention to his Majesty's governor were punished as criminal actions, are convinced that the menaces secretly circulated by the emissaries of Caraccas are to be regarded as the predeterminations of a government whose politics know no restraint from morality, and with which loose suspicion entails certain ruin.

"The present extraordinary conduct of the council (Junta del gobierno) of Caraccas sufficiently evinces the government has not

changed its principles. Amongst a number of other instances, an old gentleman, (Don Christoval de Robles,) the most respectable Spaniard I have ever known, in whom alone the high sense of honour the nation pretends to is not fabulous, who had held the principal civil employment of the island for a number of years with honour and unimpeached integrity, because he has unguardedly expressed himself pleased with the justice of his Majesty's government, and has been ready on all occasions of difficulty to assist me with his advice and experience, has been proceeded against privately by the Junta del gobierno of Caraccas, and adjudged a traitor to his king and country. This decree has actually been acted upon; and property, which he casually possessed upon the continent, has in consequence been confiscated.

"This island being either exchanged or restored at a peace, will produce in the minds of the South Americans a lasting distrust of the English nation; they are naturally favourably disposed to his Majesty's government, but the apprehension of again falling under the dominion of Spain keeps them at a fearful

distance. They say: 'You take possession of our country, at which we rejoice as an event most favourable to our happiness and conducive to our prosperity; but we have scarcely tasted the advantages of an equitable and just government, when you make a sacrifice of us as a peace-offering to a jealous and vindictive government, whose spies have registered all our good offices, which will not fail to be construed into crimes for which our persons and property will answer.'

"You conceive, perhaps, that I am overcharging the picture; but, I regret to say, too many facts can be adduced to attest its truth.

"I hope his Majesty's ministers will never be brought either to restore or exchange this valuable island; for, besides the certain ruin and misery which it will occasion to all those who have shown any attachment to his Majesty's government, it will leave a lasting, indelible impression on the minds of the South Americans. Though a valuable equivalent might be proposed, I humbly conceive it would be highly impolitic to accept it. The inhabitants of all the neighbouring provinces have their eyes fixed upon Trinidad: if retained, it

will exalt their estimation of the power and energy of his Majesty's government, and determine them upon the first favourable occasion to seek its protection; if restored, it will leave an opinion of weakness unfavourable and destructive to any future views on this quarter of the world.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) "THOMAS PICTON."

"The Right Honourable
"H. Dundas."

At the same time he addressed Sir Ralph Abercromby to the following effect:—

"Trinidad, October 30th, 1799.

"SIR,

"Every one here looks forward to your excellency's protection and patronage, and you must expect to be troubled upon all occasions of consequence to the prosperity and well-being of this colony.

"The late brilliant and important successes of the allied armies, and other favourable circumstances, holding out the probability of an approaching peace, the most respectable planters and settlers of Trinidad begin to enter-

tain serious apprehensions of their future situation; and express great alarm and uneasiness lest his Majesty's ministers might be induced to exchange this island for Porto Rico, or any other proposed equivalent. They are well aware of the high degree of importance attached by the Spanish government to this settlement on account of its situation, which will render it at all times dangerous and formidable to the neighbouring provinces of South America; the inhabitants of which have their eyes continually fixed upon Trinidad, and cannot fail to be affected by its newly-acquired opulence and flourishing situation.

"I have taken the liberty of enclosing the copy of a letter I have just written to Mr. Secretary Dundas on the occasion, by which your excellency will see the ruin which menaces the English and other inhabitants who have shown any marks of attachment to his Majesty's government, upon the event of the island being restored. The great object of the Spanish government in wishing to repossess itself of this island, is to show their subjects in these countries the little reliance they can place upon the protection and promises of the

British government, which so easily sacrifices them for a supposed advantage; and, above all, by the vengeance they will not fail to execute upon all those who have shown themselves pleased with the new order of things, to deter their subjects on the continent from all thoughts of ameliorating their miserable situation by having recourse to the protection of Great Britain.

"It requires considerable practical knowledge of the Spanish government, to be enabled to form anything like a just idea of its politics. The individual is superstitious without religion and punctilious without honour; the government, with all the formality and mask of integrity, and the most extravagant pretensions to good faith, pursues the object of its ambition, avarice, or revenge, without any restraint from morality or respect for engagements.

"No stipulation on the part of Great Britain will be effectual to secure the inhabitants from its unrelenting resentment. Its mode is to promise everything; but the public instructions to their governors, &c. which they refer to upon all occasions, are always accompanied by others, *via reservada*, of an opposite import.

Those who possessed situations under the Spanish government, who were permitted by your excellency to retain them and remain upon this island, accepted of your indulgence by the advice of M. Chacon, for the purpose of remaining as spies upon the conduct of the inhabitants. These people kept a minute register, in which all the inhabitants who had at any time expressed themselves pleased with his Majesty's government were calumniated in the most scandalous manner, and represented as traitors to the King of Spain. This was carried on with great secrecy; but at length a disagreement amongst the parties led to a discovery, and I was enabled to get possession of it. The false and infamous representations it contained were calculated to render all the most respectable inhabitants objects of resentment to the Spanish government.

"I beg leave to refer your excellency to the enclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Secretary Dundas, wherein I have urged the reasons why I am of opinion that it would be extremely impolitic to restore Trinidad on any terms or for any equivalent. I shall not now intrude any further upon your time than to

claim a continuance of your patronage in favour of a large body of planters, who, having through your means experienced the advantages of his Majesty's government, conceive they have a claim upon your future good offices.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) "TH. PICTON."

"His Excellency
"Sir Ralph Abercromby."

It would appear that the strength of these representations had their due weight with his Majesty's ministers; for, in the peace which ensued about two years after this period, Trinidad was retained amongst the British possessions.

CHAPTER V.

Character of Colonel Picton's Administration. — Reward of his services. — Attempt to injure his reputation. — Formally appointed Governor of Trinidad.—Change of Ministry at home. — Trinidad put in commission. — Insulting treatment of Governor Picton. — His feelings in consequence.—He determines to resign.

Each act of Colonel Picton's administration appeared the result of a well-matured judgment and an honest zeal. It is a matter of surprise, therefore, that those who afterwards tried to overwhelm him with their multiplied accusations did not select some less noble and weaker individual. Every record of Sir Thomas Picton's life is an honourable memorial of services rendered. From the first moment of his being placed in that situation which enabled him to show the great powers of his mind, his career was a continued series of advantages to his country: esteemed and respected by all men of worth to whom he

was known, he received from them the kindly attentions and regards of private life; while his public services were constantly obtaining for him the approbation of his sovereign and the warm commendations of his ministers. Nor did his services pass unrewarded: in a letter dated January 4th, 1800, we find him again requesting Mr. Dundas to lay his grateful acknowledgments at his Majesty's feet for his further munificence in adding the sum of one thousand two hundred pounds to his annual salary.

It was, however, about this period that an attempt was made to injure his reputation. Some person in England, who had obtained the ear of the minister, made a charge against him of having exported the produce of the colony in foreign vessels, to the injury of the British ship-owner; and it was implied that he did this for his own advantage. But this charge was discovered to proceed from private ill-will and personal disappointment; and it was so clearly disproved by documentary evidence sent to England from Trinidad, that Mr. Dundas wrote a highly complimentary letter to Colonel Picton, containing an assur-

ance "that he and his colleagues were perfectly satisfied with his explanation, and convinced that the charges brought against him were without the least foundation."

But a more distinguished and gratifying mark of the estimation in which he was still held by his royal master and his government was conveyed to him within a few months after he had refuted these unfounded imputations. He was now formally appointed governor of the island: hitherto he had only held the situation under the instructions of Sir Ralph Abercromby — being, in point of fact, military commandant; but he now received his Majesty's commission appointing him "civil and military governor." A letter from Lord Hobart, dated June 29th, 1801, announcing his Majesty's determination, accompanied the despatch containing his appointment to the governorship; and the following short extract from this letter contains a flattering testimony of the value in which his services were held: "The ability and zeal which you have shown in administering the affairs of the island of Trinidad, and the honourable testimony borne to your conduct by the com-

mander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces in the Leeward and Windward Charibee Islands on every occasion, have induced his Majesty to appoint you to the civil government of that island; and I have the satisfaction of enclosing herewith your commission, and the instructions, under his Majesty's sign manual, for your guidance in executing the duties of that office."

This unequivocal mark of confidence bestowed upon him by his own government was to Colonel Picton a great source of consolation under the difficulties which beset him, and a spur to further exertion: to use his own words, "it could not fail to animate his zeal and humble endeavours to merit a continuance of his Majesty's favour."

Appended to the commission was a mass of instructions, headed "Instructions to our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Picton, Esq. our Governor and Commander-in-chief in and over our island of Trinidad. Given at our Court at Saint James's, the first day of June eighteen hundred and one, in the forty-first year of our reign."

We have subjoined an extract from these

instructions, because it is necessary that the reader should understand the extent of Colonel Picton's powers, and his directions as to their exercise, before we enter into a detail of the charges which were afterwards preferred against him for his conduct in the government of this island.

"No. 7.

"It is our will and pleasure, that for the present, and until our further pleasure shall be signified therein, the same courts of judicature which subsisted in the said island previous to the surrender thereof to us, shall, for the present, be continued in the exercise of all the judicial powers belonging to them in all criminal and civil cases, and that they shall proceed according to the laws by which the said island was then governed; and that such judicial powers as, previous to the surrender of the said island to us, were exercised by the Spanish governor, shall be exercised by you our governor in like manner as the same were exercised previous to the surrender of the said island."

So decisive are these "instructions" in point

ing out the course to be pursued by Governor Picton in the administration of the laws, that all responsibility seemed at once taken from him in regard to their operation. But it will be perceived, on reference to the instructions left by Sir Ralph Abercromby upon appointing Colonel Picton to the command of the island, that *they* were the basis upon which those now sent by his Majesty's government were established; and by this ratification of Governor Picton's former powers and instructions, it was evident that the antecedent operation had given satisfaction, and that every act which Colonel Picton had committed up to this period was thus justified and approved by his Majesty's ministers.

Towards the close of this year he received a further instance of his Majesty's favour, in being promoted to the rank of Brigadier-general; the Gazette appointment being dated October the 22nd, 1801. Unfortunately, at this period a change took place in the affairs at home: Mr. Pitt, who had for nearly eighteen years been at the head of the administration, resigned his situation. With a change of ministers came, as usual, a change of measures;

and Lord Sidmouth, who then came into office, conceived that the condition of the West India colonies might be improved by what he denominated "putting the islands in commission;" or, in other language, taking the government out of the hands of the present governors, and placing it under the control of three or more individuals, called commissioners, who were, in their united capacities, to administer the laws and have command over the troops in the separate islands. It is difficult to say upon what grounds this change was projected; but we offer the following extracts from Lord Hobart's letter to Governor Picton, in the hope that the reader may be able to glean some satisfactory reason from them.

This letter is dated July the 9th, 1802. After the usual preamble to introduce the subject of the communication, his lordship at length explains its object by observing, "His Majesty has thought it expedient to place the government of the island in commission; judging that, from the union of civil, military, and naval talents, combined in the persons selected for this service, advantages

must arise which cannot be expected from the labours of any one individual."

Now, nothing would be more natural than to suppose, from the tenor of this passage, that some of Governor Picton's measures had been of evil tendency to the interests of the colony. If, however, it is proved that this conclusion is without foundation, the only interpretation which can be put upon this proceeding is, that "advantages *may* arise" under this experimental change which had not been produced under the old system. The following passage from the same letter from Lord Hobart will prove the first conclusion groundless; and the reader is in consequence left to trace the operation of this new government.

His lordship adds, immediately after the last extract, "The experience of your conduct from the time the island was first placed under your charge has induced his Majesty to select you as one of the persons to whom this important trust (that of commissioner) shall be confided." And then comes a recital of the names of the other two commissioners; — the first on the list being William Fullarton, Esq. colonel in the Indian army, F.R.S.; after him, Samuel

Hood, Esq. a captain in his Majesty's navy; and last of all, Brigadier-general Picton, the late governor, whose good conduct in that capacity, as above stated, had obtained for him the high opinion of his Majesty's government, together with the subordinate and inferior appointment of junior commissioner! The argument, in point of fact, being what logicians would call "*ad absurdum*," viz. that Colonel Picton's conduct as governor had given so much satisfaction to his Majesty's ministers, that they had superseded him in his situation, and conferred upon him an appointment inferior both in rank, respectability, and remuneration!—Perhaps as novel a mode of rewarding five years' approved and meritorious services as could well have suggested itself to the mind of a minister.

It would be difficult to say what were the feelings of Governor Picton upon being exposed to this insulting treatment, just as he had by the greatest good management and exertion succeeded in bringing the colony to a degree of tranquillity and prosperity which the most sanguine could hardly have anticipated. To say he was indignant at this treatment,

would be only attributing to him the common resentment of an ordinary mind: he was more, much more; he experienced all that a noble and high-spirited man must feel when exposed to unmerited insult — and that insult, too, rendered more galling by being disguised in the garb of compliment: and for this he was expected to be grateful, — was told it was an honour and a proof of the high estimation in which he was held.

From his private correspondence, in which he adverts to the receipt of this intelligence, it appears that he considered himself not only "ill-treated," but "insulted." He observes: "Never, I am certain, did the actions of men so totally contradict their protestations as in the treatment which I have received. After the continued assurances of the satisfaction which I have given by the active, and, as they say, 'judicious,' discharge of my duty, together with their reiterated assertions that the government of this island should undergo no alteration, I the next month receive a letter announcing that I am to consider myself as no longer the governor; but, in consideration of my 'good conduct,' I am told that I am ap-

pointed to the important trust of *junior commissioner.*"

Had Governor Picton refused the unworthy situation which he was now offered, the colony must have suffered materially for want of his assistance; for it was not to be supposed that either of the other commissioners, Colonel Fullarton or Commodore Hood, could possess any knowledge of the affairs of the island. It was this consideration alone which induced him to hold for a short period the appointment to which he was nominated; it being, however, his full determination to tender his resignation so soon after his coadjutors' arrival in Trinidad as he had given them such information as would assist them in administering the affairs of the government, without producing those injurious consequences usually attendant upon a change of rulers.

CHAPTER VI.

Statement relative to Dr. Lynch and the Under Secretary of State. — Conflicting affidavits of those gentlemen. — Colonel Draper and Mr. Sullivan.—General Picton's reception of Colonel Fullarton in Trinidad. — Extraordinary motion in Council. — General Picton resigns his office of Commissioner.—His letter to the Attorney-general of Trinidad. — Difficulties which General Picton had to encounter in assuming the government of Trinidad. — Colonel Fullarton's pamphlet.—Charges brought against General Picton. — Colonel Fullarton publicly rebuked by Sir Samuel Hood. — Extract from Colonel Fullarton's pamphlet.

PAUSING for a while in tracing the operation of this experimental scheme of government and its results, together with the influence which it had upon the life and character of the subject of this memoir, we will notice a transaction which seems to throw some light upon the intentions of government in instituting this commission. The facts are these:—

Dr. Frederic Thaddeus Lynch was practising in the town of Galway, Ireland, as a physician, when his wife's brother, Nicholas

Lynch, a resident in the island of Trinidad, came to Ireland on a visit to his relations. This gentleman represented to Dr. Lynch in glowing terms the success which would be sure to attend him if he would go to the West Indies, and there practise as a physician; which, together with similar statements in the public prints at the same period, induced Dr. Lynch to leave Galway and come to London, to embark for Trinidad. In London he saw several accounts in the papers, purporting that government would give large tracts of land to any white persons desirous of settling in Trinidad; and accordingly Dr. Lynch called at the secretary of state's office, in order to have an interview with Lord Hobart, the principal secretary of state, or Mr. Sullivan, the undersecretary. He had an interview with Mr. Sullivan, to whom he mentioned the object of his application. Mr. Sullivan, however, informed him, that the grants of land were very trifling, and intended for mechanics or labouring men, and not for those in the station of life which he held. Satisfied with this information, Dr. Lynch was about to depart, when Mr. Sullivan asked him whether he had any

letters of introduction to his Majesty's commissioners in Trinidad; upon which Dr. Lynch replied, that he had only two to Governor Picton: in reply to this Mr. Sullivan remarked, "You had better procure some, if possible, to the first commissioner, Colonel Fullarton;" the reason which he gave for this recommendation being, "*That Colonel Fullarton would have it in his power to be of more service to Dr. Lynch, as in all probability Colonel Picton would be ordered to return to England before the expiration of six months; as Colonel Fullarton was instructed to investigate the conduct of Colonel Picton whilst in the Island of Trinidad.*"

Thus far the affidavit of Dr. Lynch; after having perused which, it is startling to read the following extract from that made by Mr. Sullivan:

"The Right Honourable John Sullivan, one of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, &c. *maketh oath and saith, that he did not, at the time referred to in the affidavit of Dr. Lynch, or at any time since, know, nor had he any reason to suspect or believe, that Colonel Fullarton had any instructions whatever, either of a public or private nature, to investigate the conduct of General*

Picton in Trinidad, or to procure his removal from the government of that island, or his being ordered to return to England;" while in the same affidavit he goes on to state, that "This deponent now positively and solemnly upon his oath declares that he never did, either directly or indirectly, inform Dr. Lynch or any other person, either in conversation or otherwise, before the month of December one thousand eight hundred and two, or at any other time, that in all probability General Picton would be ordered to return to England in six months, as Colonel Fullarton was instructed to investigate the past conduct of General Picton at Trinidad; nor use any words to that or the like effect," &c.

There is something painful in the perusal of these contradictory statements, made upon oath, and coming from two individuals filling respectable situations in society. It is obvious that either Mr. Sullivan or Dr. Lynch must have been guilty of a wilful and deliberate perjury; which, we shall not pretend to decide: but Colonel Draper, who so nobly defended General Picton during his nearly eight years' persecution, was so fully convinced of the truth of Dr.

Lynch's statement, that in his "Address to the British Public," he undisguisedly charges Mr. Sullivan with the crime of perjury, and calls upon him to vindicate himself before the people of England. Mr. Sullivan contented himself, however, by filing a criminal information against Lieutenant-colonel Draper for the libel. The result of this was not entirely satisfactory to the Right Honourable Secretary; as, after proceedings which lasted nearly three years, Colonel Draper, when found guilty, was required only to give two sureties in five hundred pounds each, and to be bound himself in one thousand pounds, to appear when called upon to receive judgment, and to be of good behaviour: no judgment was ever afterwards given.

It is now necessary to continue the history of General Picton's career, as every reader will form his own conclusion with regard to the comparative veracity of the two affidavits.

Colonel Fullarton, the first commissioner, arrived in Trinidad about the 4th of January 1803, when he was received by General Picton with every mark of gentlemanly respect and hospitality; nay, even a friendly intercourse seemed to exist between them;

and in a letter from the first commissioner to Mr. Sullivan, he remarks: "I was received by General Picton with great politeness, and with all the attention which Lord Hobart had been pleased to direct:" while, in a subsequent communication, he adds, "General Picton and I have carefully read Lord Hobart's instructions to the commissioners, and we shall not lose a moment in preparing to carry his lordship's intentions into effect."

Colonel Fullarton, after availing himself of the information which the late governor was so ready and able to impart, commenced making himself extremely active in the affairs of the island; in fact, as General Picton afterwards observed, when speaking of the first commissioner's arrival at Trinidad, "I began to think, after a short time, that Colonel Fullarton was sent out to supersede me as governor of the island; for, long before the arrival of Commodore Hood, he would have taken the management of both myself and the government under his sole control." But still there was no positive misunderstanding between the two commissioners until the 12th of February, about ten days previous to the arrival of

20212

Commodore Hood, when General Picton was astonished by Colonel Fullarton making the following motion in council:—"That there be produced certified statements of all the criminal proceedings which have taken place since the commencement of the late government; together with a list, specifying every individual, of whatever country, colour, or condition who has been imprisoned, banished, fettered, flogged, burned, or otherwise punished; also specifying the dates of their respective commitments, trials, sentence, period of confinement, punishments, and of all those who have died in prison."

It could not for one moment be doubted that this was a preliminary step towards an inquiry into the conduct of the late governor, under whose sanction, and by whose directions, these little *desagrémens* were supposed to have been inflicted. This was the first hostile act of Colonel Fullarton against General Picton, who might now foresee what was to follow. General Picton doubtless did so, but he was not to be terrified. His conduct throughout this unhappy business was worthy of himself. Conscious of his own integrity, he could endure

the ignominy thrown upon his name with patience, because he knew it to be undeserved. When he perceived the dishonourable grounds upon which Colonel Fullarton had commenced his attack, having no taste for that species of warfare, and feeling at the same time that he could not hope to operate with him for the benefit of the colony, he resolved to delay no longer the resolution which he had previously formed; and accordingly, upon the arrival of Sir Samuel Hood, on the 22d of February, he tendered to his Majesty the resignation of his office of commissioner.

Nothing can more strongly evince the opinion which General Picton entertained at this period of Colonel Fullarton and his actions, than the following letter to Mr. Gloster, the attorney-general of Trinidad, written for the purpose of obtaining the before-mentioned affidavit from Dr. Lynch.

"London, May 20th, 1805.

"My dear Sir,

"Having laid your letter, and its enclosure from Dr. Lynch, before the Right Hon. Board of Privy Council, Mr. Sullivan, at his own

request, was examined upon oath, and to my great astonishment denied *in toto* the conversation stated in Dr. Lynch's letter; neither, however, denying or acknowledging that he had an interview with him. Under such circumstances, and in the particularly delicate situation in which I was placed, it would have been the height of imprudence in me to have pursued the business any further upon the single evidence of a letter; I was therefore under the necessity of appearing satisfied with the explanation, and declined asking Mr. Sullivan any questions: but retiring from the board, I immediately expressed my doubts to Mr. Fawkener, the clerk in waiting, and communicated to him my determination of immediately applying to Dr. Lynch for a confirmation of his statement upon oath. I have, in consequence, to request that you will have the goodness to assure Dr. Lynch that I am very remote from entertaining suspicion of his veracity; but as his statement to you has been wholly denied upon oath by Mr. Sullivan, I would recommend that he should maturely reconsider the business, and after recalling all the circumstances to his recollection, if he should then be convinced of the

correctness of his former statement, in that case I wish that he would restate it upon oath before the chief justice, and transmit certified copies of such affidavit to the Right Honourable Earl Camden, Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, and to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Sidmouth, President of the Council, which will enable me at a future period to bring the business again forward in a less questionable shape.

"If the statement be really true, no expression can sufficiently characterise the conduct it relates to; and if not, it is most extraordinary that Dr. Lynch should have had so circumstantial, and, I might almost say, prophetic a dream: as to there being any separate private instructions to Mr. Fullarton from the secretary of state's office, that is entirely out of the question; but if there really was any secret understanding, it must have been wholly between Mr. Fullarton and Mr. Sullivan. They might, like *true Indian politicians*, have prepared two strings to their bow; and, if the insult of degrading me from the high situation of governor-in-chief to that of a junior commissioner did not excite my resentment, and occasion my

immediate resignation, the other mode might have been reserved as an ultimatum to get rid of me at all events.

"Do not, my dear sir, delay attending to this business, which is of considerable importance to,

"Your faithful humble servant, &c.

"THOMAS PICTON."

But before entering into the charges which were brought against General Picton, within six months after the appointment of Colonel Fullarton to the office of first commissioner, it may not be considered superfluous briefly to recapitulate from the public documents the difficulties which he had to encounter from the period of his first assuming the government of Trinidad. These documents represent the population as composed of bad people of every description, — brigands, refugees, and desperate characters, who had been implicated in the rebellions and massacres of all the neighbouring islands, — long accustomed to a timid and temporizing government with no regular police; the island situated only a few leagues from a popu-

lous continent inhabited by the enemy, and presenting an immense extent of unprotected coast, which enabled them to keep up an almost uninterrupted communication with the numerous disaffected in the colony. To subdue this mass of disaffection, and mould it into something like a stable government, Colonel Picton had, in the early and most perilous period of his arduous duties, a force which would have been held contemptible even if the island had been one of our oldest and most loyal possessions.

By the monthly return, dated September 1st, 1797, the number of British troops fit for duty in the garrisons of Trinidad amounted to only three hundred and fifteen rank and file; while, to protect the coast, there were only two guardships, one of these being totally unfit for service. In a letter to Sir Ralph Abercromby, dated May 29th, 1797, General Picton observes, "I receive repeated expresses from the commanders of the windward and remote quarters of the island, representing that the enemy's privateers are continually hovering about the coasts, and keep up a constant communication with their friends on shore: this they accom-

plish without the least risk or danger, as we have not seen or heard of an English cruiser off the coast for nearly two months."

In addition to these means, Governor Picton had one great difficulty within himself, in being entirely ignorant of the laws which he had to administer; for although he was perfectly well acquainted with the French and Spanish languages, and had obtained a great insight into the characters and habits of the people, still he was not acquainted with the laws of Spain, although he was to be made amenable to his country for this omission in his education; and he was actually tried by the laws of England for being ignorant of the laws of Spain:—a species of knowledge with which even the judge by whom he was tried was probably not very conversant, and which was at least a very pardonable omission in the education of a soldier.

When we reflect for a moment upon these accumulated difficulties and abuses which Governor Picton had to overcome and correct, and compare them with the inadequate means at his disposal, we may wonder that the most sanguine disposition could under such circum-

stances anticipate success: but Picton not only dared to hope for, but even achieved success. Colonel Fullarton shall himself bear testimony to the qualities which enabled him to do so. During the time that the public attention was engrossed by this affair, several pamphlets appeared on either side. Among others Colonel Fullarton himself assumed the pen, and in his second pamphlet the following passage occurs: "On the departure of Sir Ralph Abercromby, in March 1797, Colonel Picton remained as commandant; several circumstances, as before mentioned, concurred to qualify him for the appointment,—great natural sagacity, address, activity, and acquaintance with the French and Spanish languages, without which it is impossible for any one to be an efficient ruler of Trinidad."

But Colonel Fullarton accords him this meed of praise only that he may afterwards more unreservedly riot in abuse. We shall continue our quotations from this pamphlet.

"At that time the ungovernable violence and the systematic tyranny of Colonel Picton were probably restrained by the respected character and virtues of Sir Ralph Abercromby from

displaying anything like the rigour and extent which they afterwards exhibited, and which he now describes as the 'energies of his nature.' From the first month subsequent to Sir Ralph Abercromby's departure, Colonel Picton, in his capacity as commandant, and afterwards governor of Trinidad, commenced a career marked with atrocities, which, though I am precluded at present from detailing, must in some form or other come before the world, and at all events, I am warranted in asserting, must be registered in the records of eternal justice."

Whether this last sentence is merely a silly attempt at fine writing, or whether it is intended to convey a grossly impious hope, we leave to the reader. But let us hear the Colonel again.

"Colonel Picton contrived very soon to outrage and expel the assessor for the Spanish laws, Don Jurado, and almost every Spanish and English lawyer, from the settlement, stating in a letter to a confidential correspondent, that lawyers were like carrion-crows, who flocked around carcasses and corruption.

"A continued series of severities occasioned

the flight of many hundred Spanish peons or labourers.

* * * * * *

"The suspension and imprisonment of Don Francisco de Castro, Dr. Timbrell, and others, were only continuations of the same persecuting spirit. All these collective cases, however, to which I have now referred, convey but a mutilated and imperfect notion of the connected series of oppressive acts by which Colonel Picton so powerfully enforced the reign of terror, shut all mouths that dared to speak against him, and, by the influence of fear, deception, corruption, and incredible artifice, extorted addresses praising his vigilance, his vigour, and his measures, from which he was denominated by his partisans 'the saviour of the island.'"

These are but a few of the charges brought against General Picton by Colonel Fullarton in this pamphlet. The reader would, however, be but tired and disgusted by a detail of its tedious contents. It would be almost impossible, and it is quite unnecessary, to enumerate all the charges it contained, and the assertions it put forward; the majority were

merely the inventions of a malignant spirit, and the rest were the highly-coloured and exaggerated descriptions of an enemy. There was, however, one statement made by Colonel Fullarton, which, as it comes within the range of proof, may serve to show upon what basis he rested his facts. At p. 40 of this pamphlet he says—

"A continued series of severities occasioned the flight of many hundred Spanish peons or labourers;" and at p. 41, "A great body of Spanish inhabitants and *other foreigners* in Trinidad abandoned the colony."

This is a tangible fact, which may be proved or disproved from official documents. If true, it certainly raises a strong presumption against General Picton's administration; but, if false, it furnishes a yet stronger ground for rejecting the rest of Colonel Fullarton's testimony; for we can hardly suppose that a man who would venture upon a falsehood capable of immediate disproof, would hesitate at others which could be examined with difficulty, and only at a distant period.

General Picton's friends met it thus:—From the official return of the population made by

Mr. Mallet, the government surveyor, it appears that in the year 1797 (when Colonel Picton commenced his administration) the number of inhabitants was 17,718. In 1802 it amounted to 28,427. This was certainly an increase of 10,709 inhabitants in five years;—an unhappy piece of evidence, because its authority was indisputable. But General Picton's friends could assume the offensive against his accuser: they reminded Colonel Fullarton of the public rebuke he received from his brother commissioner, Sir Samuel Hood,—a name no less celebrated in our naval, than Picton's in our military annals. That straightforward sailor was ashamed of the dissembling practices of his colleague. Having in vain tried to co-operate with Colonel Fullarton, he could at last restrain his indignation no longer, but addressed him, in consequence of Colonel Fullarton having caused a proclamation of the commission to be made and posted up unknown to his coadjutors, in the presence of the whole council of Trinidad, in the following words:

"I was never consulted respecting the proclamation; and I am sorry, sir, that you

have so bad a memory. Do you already forget having assured me that the proclamation was torn down by General Picton's partisans? I am ashamed of you; ashamed to be seen in the same company. Not with you, General Picton — I shall be proud to act with you on all occasions; you have never attempted to impose upon me; you have allowed me to see my own way. I have never had any conversation with General Picton respecting the disagreements; but as for you, sir, (turning to Mr. Fullarton,) your behaviour has been such, that nothing but the paramount obligation of his Majesty's commission could seat us at the same board. I shall, however, request to be relieved as soon as possible from so disagreeable a situation, with a colleague with whom I can have no further confidence. I was in hopes you had been occupied in carrying his Majesty's orders into effect, by forwarding the objects of the commission; but I find, on the contrary, that every step you have taken has tended to protract them: you have, in the most arbitrary, indecent manner, taken advantage of my absence to suspend the public secretary, contrary to the opinion of the coun-

cil and of your colleague, who protested against the measure, and advised that the consideration should be postponed until my arrival. Instead of cordially co-operating with General Picton, you seem to have done everything in your power to inspire him with disgust. The general dissatisfaction which your proceedings have given to the public bodies, magistrates, and respectable people of the colony, is but too apparent. You are doing everything you can to ruin the country; but you shall not effect it—we will not allow you."

General Picton, in his letter to Lord Hobart, remarks, that "Mr. Fullarton was so confounded by these truths, urged with the manly and forcible eloquence with which a noble mind is naturally transported on the discovery of falsehood and treachery, that he could not utter a syllable in reply." Colonel Fullarton, nevertheless, ventured to express himself upon a future occasion, when further removed from the indignant commodore: then he denied that Sir Samuel Hood had ever made use of such language, although he acknowledged that he had "uttered many improper and inadmissible expressions; but," he adds, "even if this ha-

rangue had been uttered in my presence, with all the forcible and manly eloquence so ingeniously discovered in the enunciations of the commodore, it would be the first instance upon which any sort of eloquence, from the bellowing of a boatswain to the superior emanations of the most distinguished orators, had ever silenced or confounded me."

Sir Samuel Hood never, however, contradicted one word of the report given of his speech, and was even known to observe upon the correctness with which it was recorded. Colonel Fullarton was evidently unwilling to admit, and would readily not have believed, that Sir Samuel Hood entertained so unfavourable an opinion of him; and in several passages of his second pamphlet he endeavours to impress upon the reader that Commodore Hood did not look upon him in so culpable a light as, from that officer's remarks, made both verbally and in writing, the world would have been induced to suppose. In one paragraph he says, "The names of Hood, Grinfield, and Maitland are undoubtedly familiar to the public mind for important naval and military services on which they have been employed: it is unfortunate

for the two former of those characters that they have suffered their well-earned reputations to be tarnished by a man whose superior sagacity and artifice, aided by the machinations of numerous adherents implicated with him, acquired an ascendency over their inferior penetration."

This sentence seems to admit that those officers had expressed themselves in a decided manner as inimical to Colonel Fullarton and his measures : and the world knows what to think of opprobrium thrown upon such names as these.*

* The following letter from Sir Samuel Hood to Earl Camden, Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, expresses in more distinct terms the opinion which he entertained of the first commissioner.

" Centaur, Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes, Sept. 1, 1804.

" My Lord,

" I should do great injustice to myself and my late colleague, Brigadier-general Picton, if I did not (after reading a publication of Mr. Fullarton's respecting the commission at Trinidad last year) inform your lordship at an early period of the fabrication in various passages of words said to have been spoken by me. The very harsh expressions and the acrimony with which Mr. Fullarton brings forward this epistle, false almost in every page, are such, that I trust your lordship and others of his Majesty's ministers will view it as it deserves. Mr. Fullarton asserts that I consulted the brigadier,

Perhaps it may be useful to subjoin a few more extracts from Colonel Fullarton's pam-

before the council was assembled, respecting the matters we were to enter upon; *I declare upon my honour no such communication ever took place;* neither did ever the brigadier make use of one expression out of the commission that could tend to lead me on his side: but I was guided by honourable sentiments, and not by such duplicity and intriguing as was exhibited in every part of Mr. Fullarton's transactions. But Mr. Fullarton used every art even to get *his lady* to aid in leading me into a track that must have soon destroyed the tranquillity of the colony. This false philanthropy must now be sufficiently brought to light, so as to need no comment. He interprets words spoken in council, in my house, as not agreeing with my colleague: I give the most perfect contradiction thereto; and I cannot allow this to pass over without remarking on the means adopted by persons whom he calls gentlemen, who would listen to any conversation where their presence was not required; and it was not probable my servants should listen, and carry any conversation to the house of the first commissioner. I conceive such allegations can only tend to prove how ready Mr. Fullarton has been to catch at subjects which I should shudder to repeat, had I made use of such ignoble means to gain the information stated. I will not trespass longer on your lordship's time; and I shall conclude this in saying, the upright and just measures adopted by the late governor saved the island; and I rest assured his character cannot be spoken of too highly, or traduced by the artful measures of an old intriguing politician.

" I have the honour to be, &c.

" SAMUEL HOOD."

" Earl Camden, K.B. &c."

phlet: they will discover the feelings which actuated the author in his accusations. We print them without remark.

"A gentleman of great reputation in the literary world found several quires of Colonel Picton's printed libel on the counter of a shop, where they were used to wrap up the commodities sold to customers, and circulated in that manner."

"The charges against Colonel Picton were referred to in my letter to General Grinfield, dated the 23rd of May 1803: they involve a mass of criminality such as has never been brought against any British ruler. If they were unfounded in point of fact, then the fabricator of them would have deserved to be consigned to everlasting infamy and condign punishment."

"Those who read the charges, cases, and statements I have brought forward, will perceive that anything of quarrel on personal grounds was entirely *out of the question.* I must again repeat, that Colonel Picton went to

war with me because I would not sanction and adopt a system of government in Trinidad which, on his part, exhibits a more extended course of power abused, of good talents applied to evil purposes, and of more numerous atrocities by one person, than can be equalled in all the folio volumes of the State Trials, which I have carefully searched on this occasion."

"These preliminary explanations appear indispensable to the comprehension of the means by which Colonel Picton enforced his system of oppression, hermetically sealed up all sources of complaint, and extorted a mass of false and counterfeit applause; harassing with obloquy and persecution every one who impeded any object beneficial to his pecuniary concerns, or who otherwise fell under his ungovernable resentments."

"Colonel Picton affords the strongest illustration of the character, so admirably portrayed in Dr. Moore's Zeluco, of an officer who could always restrain his temper in perfect forbearance and submission on the parade, under the reprehension of a commanding officer of

such vociferating tendencies as General Grinfield; but could never put the rein on his impetuous nature when in command, or unconstrained by the presence of a superior; and still less could curb his violence when a poor soldier or helpless victim was at the mercy of his resentment."

CHAPTER VII.

Testimonials in favour of General Picton's abilities and conduct. — Flattering Address from the Inhabitants of Trinidad to the King. — Realization of Dr. Lynch's "Prophetic Dream."— General Picton's resignation accepted.— Leaves Trinidad.— Arrival at Barbadoes.— Joins General Grinfield in an Expedition against St. Lucia and Tobago. — Capture of the former. — General Orders. — The Fleet sails for Tobago. — Its Capitulation. — Despatch from the Commander-in-chief. — General Picton appointed Commandant. — Excitement in England against him. — Its effects. — Leaves Tobago. — Arrives in London. — Artful devices to inflame the British Public. — Their success.

THE reader would doubtless be happy to turn from the painful narrative of an individual endeavouring by every means in his power to destroy the good name of a man whose character had hitherto been without stain, and whose after-life was marked by the most distinguished services. But much yet remains untold, and the biographer of Picton unwillingly recalls these now forgotten calumnies.

We will first see what those who had the most ample means of judging thought of these statements at the time.

A few extracts from the correspondence of the parties only are necessary to show in what degree of esteem General Picton was held, and the light in which the charges brought against him were viewed by the officers under whose immediate observation both the general and Colonel Fullarton were placed. These distinguished men, without a single exception, expressed, both verbally and in print, their unqualified approbation of the conduct of General Picton; while, on the other hand, they spoke in decided censure of his accuser.

Amongst those who may be mentioned as the warmest supporters and friends of General Picton, were Sir Ralph Abercromby; Vice-admiral, Sir Samuel Hood; Lord Hobart, at that time secretary for the colonial department; Generals Grinfield and Maitland; Lieutenant-governor Hislop; Colonels Mosheim, Grant, and Draper; together with Captains Champain, Dickson, and Western, of the Royal Navy. Many of these names are so

well known, and their characters so highly appreciated, that it is unnecessary to do more than give a few brief extracts from their correspondence, to prove that General Picton must either have been the most deceitful, artful, and corrupt private friend or public servant that ever (in the language of his accuser) "disgraced the British name and character;" or that the blackest malice, falsehood, and treachery were employed to stigmatize his reputation, and brand his memory with infamy. It is needless to give the whole contents of the letters from which the following extracts are drawn; for, as direct testimonies of the opinion entertained of General Picton by their writers, these portions are alone valuable.

In a letter from Lord Hobart, dated July 19th, 1802, he says:—

"The first official notification I have received of any dissatisfaction at your government has been *from yourself;* and I can only observe, that the zeal and ability you have uniformly shown in maintaining the security and tranquillity of the Island during the very critical period of your command, would

alone call upon me to receive any accounts of that kind with the *greatest circumspection.*

(Signed) "HOBART."

"To Brigadier-general Picton,
&c. &c."

Lieutenant-general W. Grinfield, the commander-in-chief in the West Indies, in his public despatches, dated the 11th and 13th of August 1803, expresses himself in these strong and decided terms:—

"Circumstances, unexpected by Colonel Picton, or by any other person, have placed him for a little time in a disagreeable situation; but I am fully persuaded that his general conduct has been such as will convince the world of his merit, and his fame will rise the higher for the unmerited persecution under which he now labours.

(Signed) "W. GRINFIELD,
Lieutenant-general."

"Right Honourable Lord Hobart,
&c. &c."

At the same time, in his despatches to his

Royal Highness the Duke of York, this officer observes :—

" The disagreeable situation in which he (General Picton) has unfortunately, unintentionally, and disagreeably been placed, through the extraordinary conduct of Colonel Fullarton, requires me to desire you particularly to express my entire satisfaction of Brigadier-general Picton, both as a soldier and a gentleman.

(Signed) " W. GRINFIELD,
" Lieutenant-general."

" Colonel Churton,
" Secretary to H. R. H. the Commander-in-chief."

Brigadier-general Maitland, who was ordered to take the military command of the colony in June 1803, after General Picton had resigned the office of junior commissioner, thus spoke of him, in reply to the magistrates and council, when they waited upon him with an address upon his being relieved in the command by Lieutenant-governor Hislop :—

" Gentlemen, I am most grateful for this public testimony of your approbation of my conduct, for which I return you my warmest thanks. It rises in my esteem for this reason,

that as I replaced a most distinguished and meritorious officer, it was more difficult to gain applause. I will not throw away this opportunity of expressing, in unison with you, that I greatly honour and esteem Brigadier-general Picton. In a period of public danger, when the colony was beset with traitors, and shaken by the unruly behaviour of a disorderly soldiery, (for such was the major part of the garrison in May 1797,) his undisturbed mind awed the factious, subdued the danger, and saved the colony.

(Signed) "F. R. MAITLAND."

After having perused these gratifying testimonials of the high estimation in which General Picton was held by those distinguished men who had an immediate opportunity of observing his character and actions, we are prepared to view the persecution and reproaches which he had so long to endure with less pain, because we feel that they were unable to deprive him of the esteem of those of his friends whose approbation was most valuable.

We have deviated somewhat from strict

chronological order in canvassing in this place charges which were not made public until eighteen months afterwards. But it has been deemed more convenient to introduce them here, and to dispose of their credibility whilst reviewing the conduct upon which they purported to be founded. Their evidence we have thus examined: their influence upon the fortunes of the subject of our memoir must occur again in our narrative. It is now, however, necessary to trace the career of General Picton until his return to England.

It has already been observed, that, feeling insulted by the appointment which he now held, General Picton had tendered his resignation. While the accumulated insults of the first commissioner made him particularly desirous of being released from his disagreeable situation, he was at the same time apprehensive lest an address which the inhabitants (hearing of his intention) had sent to the King, praying his Majesty not to accept their governor's resignation, might be the means of compelling him to remain. Every succeeding day convinced him that Colonel Fullarton was either appointed to, or had taken upon himself, the duty of investi-

gator into his past conduct; and General Picton, upon more than one occasion, expressed his entire conviction that the first commissioner was privately instructed to make out a case against him sufficiently strong to procure his removal. If this were true, as indeed there seems but too much reason to believe, it was mean and pitiful conduct on the part of the Government to intrude a mere spy into the confidence of a man whom it dared not openly attack, in order to work his ruin, and to use a mere tool for the accomplishment of an object so disgraceful to its members personally. It is but reasonable to suppose that Governor Picton was deemed guilty of something censurable: how absurd, then, that in order to disguise or qualify the inquiry, he was complimented upon his conduct, and appointed (doubtless as a reward) one of the commission to inquire into his own culpability! It is curious to observe how accurately the facts of this affair coincided with what General Picton called "Dr. Lynch's prophetic dream."

It will be remembered, that on the 4th of January, Mr. Commissioner Fullarton ar-

rived in Trinidad, and according to the words of Dr. Lynch's affidavit Mr. Sullivan informed him, "that in all probability General Picton would be ordered to return to England before six months." On the 31st of May, being four days within the six months, General Picton received a communication from Lord Hobart, stating that "his Majesty had been pleased to accept his resignation:" and a few days after this announcement he was superseded in the military command of the Island by the following general order of the commander-in-chief, Lieutenant-general Grinfield.

"GENERAL ORDERS.

"Head-quarters, Barbadoes, June 11th, 1803.

"Brigadier-general Maitland is to relieve Brigadier-general Picton in the command of the troops in the Island of Trinidad.

"Brigadier-general Maitland is to proceed to Trinidad with as little delay as possible; and Brigadier-general Picton, on his being relieved, has the leave of the commander of the forces to remain any time he thinks necessary at Trinidad to settle his affairs, and he may then proceed to Barbadoes or to Europe, as he pleases,

specifying his intention as soon as possible to the commander of the forces.

(Signed) "GEO. B. MORDEN,
"Lieut.-colonel, Dep. Adj.-general.
"ALEX. PITMAN, Brigadier-major."

Thus Colonel Fullarton did investigate the conduct of the late governor, and he did resign within six months.

In judging between the contradictory affidavits of Dr. Lynch and Mr. Sullivan, we may certainly, therefore, remember that the coincidence of facts strongly corroborates that of the former gentleman.

General Picton had little to detain him at Trinidad, and accordingly, on the 14th of June, he embarked for Barbadoes. According to Colonel Fullarton, "he embarked in the dark, on board the Nelly, armed schooner, for Barbadoes; not daring, as it appeared, to face an injured and exasperated people, after he was divested of the support arising from the civil and military power with which he had been formerly invested."

The following brief extract from a modern and highly authenticated work upon the West

Indies gives, however, a somewhat different impression with regard to the degree of estimation in which General Picton was held by those who were so lately subject to his authority. "On the 23rd of April 1803," says Mr. Southey, in his Chronological History of the West Indies, "the inhabitants of Trinidad presented their governor, Brigadier-general Picton, with a sword, upon his resigning the government of that Island. They also sent an address to the King, praying him not to accept of their governor's resignation."

Brigadier-general Picton arrived in Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes, just as the expedition was about to sail for the purpose of retaking the islands of St. Lucia and Tobago from the French. General Grinfield readily availed himself of Brigadier-general Picton's offer to join the expedition, and expressed much satisfaction in employing the services of so meritorious an officer: but Colonel Fullarton, in his second pamphlet, seems to consider it necessary to offer an apology for General Grinfield, for this "improper deviation from principles of military duty;" and he accordingly ventures to "avow the belief that General Grinfield was

induced to employ Brigadier-general Picton at St. Lucia and Tobago, by a strong desire to conciliate Commodore Hood, with whom it was most essential for the public service that he should continue to act on terms of cordiality and co-operation; which, it is perfectly evident, could not have been the case had General Grinfield refused to gratify the commodore in protecting Brigadier Picton." That General Grinfield could have done without this officious apology will readily be believed, upon a recollection of the observations already quoted, which were made upon Brigadier-general Picton by his commander in his despatches after the successful issue of this expedition; for the following brief account of which we are again indebted to Mr. Southey's work.

"At daylight, on the 21st of June, the expedition for the attack of St. Lucia, under the command of Commodore Hood and General Grinfield, was off the north end of that Island. In the course of the day, the greater part of the troops were disembarked in Choc Bay. About half-past five the outposts of the enemy were driven in, the town of Costries

was taken, and a summons sent to the French commandant, Brigadier Nogues. Upon the receipt of his refusal, it was determined upon by the British commanders that the Morne Fortune should be stormed the following morning at four o'clock; which was accordingly done, and the place carried in about half an hour."

General Grinfield, in his despatches, says, "that notwithstanding the spirited resistance of the French, yet no sooner were the works carried by assault, and the opposition no longer existed, than every idea of animosity seemed to cease, and not a French soldier was either killed or wounded." The Island was, in consequence, unconditionally restored to the British government.

In the "general orders" issued upon this occasion by the commander of the forces, after remarking upon the gallant behaviour of the second battalion of the Royals, and the Sixty-fourth regiment, he concludes by saying, "he is very sorry that "the Sixty-eighth regiment, by its being in reserve under Brigadier-general Picton, was not in the action; otherwise there can be no doubt but they would have

merited an equal report, as was evinced by a small detachment of that regiment in a feint attack under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Shipley."

After having secured the possession of this conquest, the troops were again embarked, and the fleet got under weigh for the island of Tobago, where it arrived on the 30th of June. General Grinfield immediately sent to demand the surrender of the place to his Britannic Majesty, at the same time that he commenced landing his troops; the advanced column of which, headed by Brigadier-general Picton, pushed on without delay, in order to urge the reply to the summons. The French general (Berthier) being, however, apprised of the force of the British, and of the taking of St. Lucia, agreed to capitulate the same day; and, according to the despatch of General Grinfield, "the French garrison marched out with the honours of war, laying down their arms after passing the guard of honour under the command of Brigadier-general Picton. In the general orders is the following remark: — "The advance march of the first column, consisting of two companies of the

Sixty-fourth regiment and five companies of the Third West India regiment, under Brigadier-general Picton, which was in all probability the cause of the speedy surrender, is entitled to military commendation."

To express in as convincing a form as possible the unshaken confidence which the commander of the forces had in General Picton, he, without any solicitation, appointed him commandant of the island of Tobago; but this situation he was enabled to hold for a very short period, as he was within a few weeks informed that Colonel Fullarton and his associates had left Trinidad for England, with a series of charges affecting his honour and humanity.

The reader will not have forgotten the highly flattering testimony in General Picton's favour, which we recently extracted from General Grinfield's correspondence with Lord Hobart and the Duke of York. At this time Colonel Fullarton had preferred no less than thirty-six criminal processes against his predecessor before the council of Trinidad. What General Grinfield thought of these accusations, his acts and his correspond-

ence therefore alike testify; and so far was his view of the circumstances concurred with by all who knew anything of Trinidad, that in the West Indies, where it may be supposed there was a better opportunity of judging of the facts, it was pretty generally thought that Colonel Fullarton had much more need of an apology for his behaviour towards Governor Picton, than General Grinfield for employing that officer's services.

During the short period that General Picton held the appointment of commandant of Tobago, he received every flattering attention from the local authorities, and, upon his departure, many complimentary letters of regret. But no time was to be lost: he received several communications from his friends in England, informing him of the horrible tales of cruelty that were current concerning him, and that the public were becoming exasperated against the "cruel governor who had been guilty of such excesses."

Upon receiving these statements, he felt that indignation which an honourable man must ever experience when he knows himself to be charged with crimes of which

his conscience tells him he is innocent. His only anxiety was to be upon the field with his enemies; for, with that idea so common to a noble mind, he thought that to be innocent was enough to enable him to prove it. Few are aware how difficult is the task of disproving any accusation, however unfounded or gross, so as to leave the individual free from the insinuations of envy or malice. The world always gives the accuser credit for some authority to support the charge; and unless the individual against whom it be brought can disprove the fact by sufficient evidence, believes him guilty: so that the accusation is received upon presumed authority, while the vindication is not admitted unless confirmed by clear and acknowledged testimonies.

Let us imagine the situation of Governor Picton, when Colonel Fullarton, shortly after his arrival in Trinidad, preferred against him the six-and-thirty processes before alluded to: what ingenuity or exertion could procure sufficient evidence to disprove these imputations to the satisfaction of the world? Not a life passed in acts of constant benevolence and virtue would have obtained for him an unsullied

reputation. He might be acquitted by those in possession of just or liberal sentiments; but the world would still say, "He never got well out of all those charges."

General Picton arrived in London in the month of October, and soon discovered the truth of the statements of his friends. The daily prints were occasionally reminding the public, (doubtless at the instigation of his enemies,) that "the blood-stained Governor of Trinidad" was in England, and that the friends of humanity were preparing to bring him before the bar of offended justice, there to expiate his crimes;" while, in more indirect terms, the prejudice of the British people was enlisted on the side of the prosecutors by certain hints, such as, "His Majesty's Government is to institute an inquiry into the conduct of a late governor, whose unheard-of cruelties will harrow up the feelings, and call forth the indignation, of every sensitive and virtuous mind."

Neither exertion nor expense was spared in order to ensure the ends of the prosecutors; their only wish was to prove him guilty; his acquittal would bring disgrace upon themselves,

and be the means of clearing him from the many calumnies with which they had attempted to overwhelm him. Corruption and perjury were even employed, in order to mislead the judges, and stir up the vindictive feelings of the public against "one of those men whose unprecedented cruelties," according to the statement of Lord Walsingham, "had deluged our colonies with human blood."

In addition to these exciting and unjust means, that guide to popular opinion, the press, with too much credulity lent its powerful aid in support of "injured innocence" and "outraged humanity;" while, fearful that even these auxiliaries would not be sufficient, coloured drawings were paraded through the streets, calling forth the public commiseration, by exhibiting the "*picture of the girl, pulley, spike, and the grillos.*"

In fact, every species of deception and artifice was employed to work upon the senses and blind the judgments of the public, so that Governor Picton should be made to fall at the feet of his accusers; but whether as the victim of justice, treachery, or persecution, was of little import to them.

CHAPTER VIII.

General Picton's patriotism. — Threatened Invasion of England by Napoleon. — Picton's Letter to Mr. Addington.—His plan for the defence of the country.—Its reception. — Prosecution continued.— Interview with Lord Hobart. — Arrested by order of the Privy Council.— Enormous bail.— Indicted upon a criminal information.— Observations upon the Indictment.—Mandamus to obtain Evidence at Trinidad.—Trial.

DEEPLY wounded in spirit by the acts of an individual; unjustly held up to the British nation as an object of reproach, and on the point of being involved in all the expense and ignominy of a prosecution by the Government; which, at the same time that it was intended to convince the world of his guilt, would justify the vindictiveness of his accusers; and this after the very same government had for years, both by rewards and correspondence, lauded his conduct to their sovereign, and given their unanimous sanction and approbation to every act of

his administration whilst governing the island of Trinidad: overwhelmed thus by private persecution and public injustice, it will hardly be believed that he should even at this period be devising a plan for the protection and defence of his country. Napoleon, who had clipped the wings of the Austrian eagle, destroyed that of Prussia, and seized the smaller states of Europe, turning their unwilling arms against the fresh objects of his attack, at this period meditated an invasion of England.

The French army was now collected in Boulogne, with a flotilla for their transport to the shores of England; Napoleon's design being to bring the war to the very homes of the English.

A miserable remnant of disaffection, it is true, existed at this moment in Great Britain; but it was against the Government, not against the country: and even if Napoleon could have succeeded in landing his troops, it is doubtful whether the most clamorous in the cry of political dissent would not have been among the most zealous in resisting the invaders. Numerous plans and suggestions for the defence of the country were constantly sent

to the ministers; advice, money, and personal services were incessantly tendered; and as the danger appeared to increase, so the means to meet it were accumulated. Amongst the earliest to offer service was General Picton; and it is but reasonable to suppose that, had his abilities been called into action in the defence of the kingdom, they would have placed him in an elevated position, both honourable to himself and valuable to his country. As an earnest of his good wishes for the constitution and government of England, he at this period of general excitement and apprehension sent the following letter to Mr. Addington.

"20th October 1803.

"SIR,

"From the ambitious views and preponderating power of the French republic, there will be an absolute necessity, whether in peace or war, for placing this country in a permanent situation, so as to be at all times in readiness to resist sudden enterprises. An appearance of weakness will not fail to invite an attack, whilst an adequate state of preparation will show the impossibility of its succeeding. The

country should not only be in a situation to oppose a successful resistance to an invading enemy, however numerous its armies or formidable its preparations, but so organised and arranged as to inspire a general sentiment of security and safety, without which she cannot long be able to preserve her independence and high rank in the political scale.

"The volunteers are the overflowing of the national spirit, and probably the happiest expedient which could have been employed to meet the immediate exigency of the times: but the spirit is kept up by fermentation, which I apprehend it will be neither possible nor politic to continue as a permanent means of defence; it is supported by alarm and apprehension; and the mind which is kept in continual agitation by those sentiments relaxes gradually, and at length yields to their destructive influence.

"There are many other insurmountable objections to it as a permanent national system, which will render its continuance precarious, inadequate, and even dangerous; for it is of a democratic construction, destructive of all discipline, without which armed bodies are but

mobs, more formidable to their friends than to their enemies.

"The grand desideratum is, a broad effectual system of defence upon an economical plan, and the greatest possible force provided at the lowest expense. Prudence must go hand in hand with preparation, or the remedy will produce a crisis equally ruinous with the disease.

"I shall leave the army and the militia where they are, considering them as easily augmentable to any extent circumstances may require. But first of all I must make some preliminary observations on the situation of a hostile army landing in this country.

"They must unavoidably come deficient in two of the most important departments of an army, cannon and cavalry; and their great object must be to force us to general and decisive actions, by way of remedying, as soon as possible, the serious inconveniences resulting from the want of those essential arms. What is advantageous to the enemy will, of course, be disadvantageous to us; and it cannot be dissembled, considering their experience and practical discipline, that they would at first have

considerable advantage over new troops: besides, the fate of battles is frequently dependent upon the caprice of fortune, and on causes not under the influence of human direction. We have inappreciable advantages, if we know how to make use of them, which it would be wanton and impolitic to hazard at once on the throw of a die. But it may be remarked, 'if the enemy is determined to bring you to action, you must fight:' yes, you must fight, but you fight on your own terms.

"According to the plan I mean to propose, you must greatly out-number the enemy in light troops, cavalry, and cannon. The moment he puts his columns in motion, they should be harassed in every direction by the irregulars, who, under protection of the cavalry and cannon judiciously posted, may approach them on all points, and distress them by an incessant fire. If they make detachments to dislodge your light troops, they can easily avoid them; and if they disperse in the pursuit, they must fall an easy prey to your cavalry. They must make up their minds either to perish gradually by this harassing warfare, or have recourse to the expedient of detaching, which

would be little less destructive. Your regular troops should dispute advantageous posts and favourable grounds, but never hazard a general affair: the principal efforts should be made on the rear and the flanks, which arrest the enemy's movements, and render his progress slow and difficult, if not impossible. His confidence will necessarily abate as he sees no period to his labours; whilst you gradually increase in military experience and courage, and prepare yourselves for the day which shall crown your patient efforts with success.

"In this kind of war you cannot have too many light troops. An active man, who knows how to load and fire at a mark, will immediately become a useful soldier: with a very little instruction, and a few days' practical experience, he will acquire a sufficient expertness in the few simple necessary movements, and in the mode of concealing himself so as to annoy the enemy. My plan is not to arm the country generally, but that every man from fifteen to fifty should be made sufficiently acquainted with arms to be useful on an emergency,—that they should be divided into five or more classes, so that you may call them out by degrees: ar-

range the young and unmarried men in the first, and those who are more advanced in life, and have families, in the more remote classes. The means of instruction should be placed within their reach, and every man should be compelled by law to conform. From these you may at all times augment your regulars and militia to any extent, and call out as great a number of irregulars as circumstances might require. If an enemy should effect a landing in force, and a campaign take place on British ground, the troops of the line and militia will require a continual infusion of recruits to supply their unavoidable losses: it would therefore be advisable to establish depôts for each corps, where a supplement of one-fourth its number should be kept in constant training for that purpose.

"I am of opinion that the arms for the irregulars should be brown, except the bayonet, and that the calibre should take a ball of twenty-five to the pound; for, independently of freeing the soldier from an unnecessary encumbering weight, which greatly impedes his movements in the desultory kind of warfare he

is to carry on, there will be a saving in ammunition of nearly thirty-five per cent.—an object of no small importance on an extensive scale.

"These troops should be clothed in a grey jacket and round hat, with accoutrements equally simple; a pouch to contain twenty-four rounds, powder-horn, and bullet-bag, suspended by a strong black or tan leather belt, when called out upon active service. They should be divided into corps not exceeding five hundred men, with an active officer of the line to command each; and they may eventually be formed into brigades, with irregular cavalry attached, and be placed under the command of partisans of superior rank. This system once made a part of the law of the land, you may call out the proportion of the population which the public safety and the circumstances of the times require without any alarming exertion, which unavoidably elevates the public mind only to let it down lower.

"These are but rough hints, which I have hastily thrown together, as suggested to me by the situation of the country. If any one of

them should prove useful, I shall esteem myself overpaid for the trouble I have taken.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your very faithful, humble servant,

"TH. PICTON."*

"To the Right Hon. Henry Addington."

* Appended to this letter is the following plan, in Sir Thomas Picton's own hand, for a new organization of the public force.

"First,—The defence of the United Kingdom, and of our political existence as an independent nation, requires a large regular force, to be constantly supplied from unperishing sources, and to be supported upon the most economical plan.

"Second,—That two hundred and fifty thousand men, cavalry and infantry, and ten thousand artillery, under the existing circumstances and relative situation of the country, will be necessary for that purpose.

"Third,—That the militia, though a most respectable body, and admirably calculated for the object of its original institution, from a total change in the state of Europe, is become wholly inadequate, and ought to be blended and assimilated with the regular force.

"Fourth,—That the old as well as new system of recruiting, having proved ineffectual for the purpose of raising or supporting the necessary public force, ought to be given up, except for colonial service.

"Fifth,—That the public force consist of a certain number of first and second battalions, with a reserve, in case of invasion or actual necessity, consisting of one-fourth the establishment of the two battalions, from which they are constantly to be supplied.

It must be remembered, while perusing this letter, that General Picton was as yet an inexperienced soldier, having served thus far more in a civil than a military career; but, with a disposition which led him to follow with interest every professional study and pursuit, he had

"Sixth,—The militia to be in the first instance incorporated into the establishment, and the population at large to make up the deficiency by conscription.

"Seventh,—During peace the second battalion to be always quartered in the counties to which they are attached, and only two-fifths of the establishment kept actually embodied.

"Eighth,—The head-quarters of every second battalion to be a depôt of arms for the use of the country.

"Ninth,—The second battalions to be commanded by general officers or colonels, with an allowance of six hundred pounds per annum, free of all taxes, &c., in lieu of pay and other emoluments.

"Tenth,—Permanent head-quarters at Exeter and York: the assembly of these central armies of reserve to be established at Salisbury, Bristol, and Worcester.

"Eleventh,—Depôts of ordnance stores to be established at each of the head-quarters.

"Twelfth,—Powder-mills and manufactories of artillery, arms, and ammunition, to be established at Worcester and its neighbourhood.

"Thirteenth,—The first battalion to be always completed from the second, except in case of actual invasion, when both are to be supplied from the reserve.

"Fourteenth,—First class of conscription from eighteen to twenty-four, unmarried.

made himself master of every theory connected with field movements and fortification, so that whenever required to enter upon active service he had only to add experience to knowledge to become great. Still this letter, as coming from the pen of Sir Thomas Picton, will be read with interest, as the production of a man who afterwards attained a celebrity which would have gained for his suggestions both attention and respect.

In tracing the histories of all who have distinguished themselves in any particular path of life, it is strange to observe the little esteem in which their early thoughts or actions were held;

"Second, from twenty-four to thirty, unmarried.

"Third, from eighteen to twenty-four, married.

"Fourth, from twenty-four to thirty, married.

"Fifth, from thirty to forty, unmarried.

"Sixth, from thirty to forty, married, respect being paid to the fathers of children.

"Fifteenth,— The period of service limited during peace to two years in the second battalion, and five in the first.

"Sixteenth,—Young men who volunteer for the cavalry, and attend at their own expense at the periods of exercise, until called upon actual service, to be excused the conscription.

"Seventeenth,—During peace one-fifth of the first battalion to be occasionally discharged, and to be filled up by the second battalion, and lastly by conscription.

we are almost invariably indebted to the individual himself for pointing out his own superiority.

General Picton had at this period done no act which entitled his suggestions to particular attention, and in consequence he merely received from Mr. Addington's secretary an acknowledgment of his letter, together with the information that it added another to the many which had been addressed to the minister upon the same subject.

But returning to General Picton's career, it is now necessary to turn our attention to the particular charge upon which Governor Picton was tried, and upon which he was condemned by the public, in spite of the judgment of a court of justice, and the decision of his Majesty's Privy Council. It was this charge upon which his future prospects were to depend, and by which the numerous accusations brought against him were to be supported.

In consequence of the sinister proceedings of his enemies, which every day assumed a new and more aggravated form, General Picton felt himself placed in the situation of a man who,

without trial, is convicted. An investigation into his conduct he could demand, but the privacy of an inquiry in the Privy Council would avail him little with the public, while the secrecy of the engines, and the low artifices which were employed, in order to shield the authors and instigators of these calumnies, rendered General Picton uncertain how to act, so as to clear his own character from the charges with which it was stained, and at the same time bring to account those who had thus aspersed him. He could not stoop to their low cunning, or trace them through the tortuous paths through which they attacked him: his noble and candid nature led him to seek his enemies in the open field. With all "the world" opposed to him, he felt that he must struggle for himself; and accordingly he waited on Lord Hobart; when it is to be presumed he demanded from that minister an explanation of the situation in which he was placed, and to know whether he was to consider that he had incurred the censure of his Majesty's government, as well as that of his subjects. But the particulars of this interview are not known, as for some reason General Picton never after-

wards alluded to it even to his most intimate friends.

In the beginning of December, he was, however, arrested by a King's messenger, by order of his Majesty's Privy Council, when he was confined in the house of Mr. Sparrow, upon the oaths and depositions of Luise Calderon, Raphael Shando, Pedro Vargas, and Juan Montes.* This was the first decisive step taken by the Government in this prosecution; and General Picton was now called upon to exert himself in order to meet the accusations which were brought against him, and convince the world that he was innocent. His enemies had taken a strong position: they

* The characters of these individuals may be thus summed up in a few words, from the evidence returned upon the mandamus :—

Luise Calderon, living with a man to whom she was inconstant, and whom she ultimately became an accomplice in robbing. Raphael Shando, once convicted of stealing, and sent to the galleys, "and not to be believed upon his oath." Pedro Vargas swore that he was a Spanish lawyer, and was accordingly brought forward to explain the Spanish laws; but his evidence was so full of prevarication and falsehood, that the judge was upon the point of committing him for wilful and corrupt perjury. Juan Montes, a deserter from the Havannah, and generally believed in Trinidad to be a spy to the Spanish government.

had appealed to the feelings of the public to avenge the cause of innocence and outraged humanity. The "blood-stained tyrant" was now before them; these friends of justice had brought him to the bar of retribution, and the people of England were called upon to pronounce him guilty. These exciting announcements were received as they were intended; and the public voice at length became so loud, that the Government were compelled, in order to stop the clamour, to enter into the inquiry. A short time after his arrest he was allowed to put in bail; but this was required to the enormous sum of forty thousand pounds!

Still he was not permitted to rest: a criminal indictment was laid against him, founded upon the before-mentioned charge, preferred by Colonel Fullarton in the Council of Trinidad,—"For the application of torture to extort confession from Luise Calderon, a girl under fourteen years of age, respecting a robbery supposed to have been committed by Carlos Gonzales against Pedro Ruiz, stated to have been frequently employed as an agent by General Picton. The torture is stated to

have been applied with such severity that the girl fell down in appearance dead, and there was no physician or surgeon to assist."

The indictment found by the grand jury was, however, framed in the accustomed style of exaggeration, and apparently wilful misstatement; in fact, the perusal of this inflammatory document was, to use the words of another distinguished victim of persecution, enough to make General Picton doubt "whether he was not as guilty as he was represented."

Amongst a variety of ingenious devices which had their origin solely in the head of the attorney who modelled this document, he is accused of "having affixed a rope to the wrists of Luise Calderon, which certain rope was made to pass through a certain pulley attached to the ceiling of the prison;" and then, the said Thomas is charged with "having caused her to be alternately raised up and down upon a certain sharp spike affixed to the floor, so that the feet of the said Luise fell every time upon the said spike, to the great injury and oppression of the said Luise;" and he, the said Thomas, is then accused of "unlawfully and *maliciously intending to injure and oppress* the said Luise;"

and "that he did make an assault, and then and there unmercifully and cruelly did bruise, beat, wound, and ill-treat the said Luise, so that her life was greatly despaired of," &c.

Upon this indictment, which was found in Hilary Term 1804, a mandamus was granted, calling upon the lieutenant-governor of Trinidad, General Hislop, "to receive proofs and examine witnesses in reference to the prosecution pending against the late governor, General Picton."* These writs of mandamus were returnable in Michaelmas Term 1805; and the cause came on

* To avoid recurring again to the affairs of Trinidad, it is only necessary to remark that the "*commissioner government*" was, after a few months' trial, found to be totally incompetent to carry on the administration of the Island. The short reign of this discordant and heterogeneous government was, however, highly injurious to the peace of the colony; and the order and subordination which Governor Picton had, after so long a period, and with so much difficulty, succeeded in establishing, were in one month nearly destroyed. Lieutenant-general Hislop was appointed lieutenant-governor upon the recall of the commissioners, and he was compelled by the severest measures again to reduce to subjection the turbulent population: but it would appear that he had either more difficulties to overcome, or less firmness for the task; as, by the following letter from Trinidad, nearly eighteen months after he had been appointed to the government, it will be seen that much

for trial in the Court of King's Bench, before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury, on the 24th of February 1806.

apprehension still existed, and that he had not entirely succeeded in rooting out the seeds of discontent and rebellion.

" Trinidad, Dec. 19th, 1805.

" We had nearly experienced a rebellion of the negroes here, and a general massacre of the whites, which, had it taken place, would have involved all the Windward Islands in general devastation. The explosion of such a volcano here, as well as at St. Domingo, would have completely overwhelmed not only the British, but all the other colonies. One of the kings or emperors, a negro slave of Shand's estate, has this day been executed in the square of the town; to-morrow six others of the royal dynasty take their leave of this world; and the severest scrutiny is making as to the intentions of these nefarious conspirators. Colonel J. Gloster discovered the plot, in the valley where he is commandant, and made immediate communication of it to the governor, who sent a strong detachment of regulars in the dead of night, and took all the conspirators into custody. Their uniforms and standards were found concealed. The council has had a permanent sitting of eight days. The unwearied solicitude and precautions of our excellent governor, Lieutenant-general Hislop, are above all praise. The projects of these scoundrels were, to get possession of all the white men, and grind them in Mr. Shand's new windmill, and they were to cast lots for the white ladies. Not a child was to have escaped their fury. The plans of these monsters have fortunately been completely frustrated, and no injurious consequences are now apprehended."

It would be both uninteresting and unnecessary to give the whole proceedings of this unprecedented trial. Mr. Garrow was employed on behalf of the crown, or, more properly, on that of Colonel Fullarton and Company; while Mr. Dallas had to conduct the defence for General Picton. The usual eloquence, sophistry, and ingenuity were displayed by both those highly talented lawyers. The witnesses were, as usual, made to contradict each other and themselves; forgetting, whilst under the bewildering influence of the learned gentlemen, every fact connected with their existence, and being made to admit or deny everything they knew, according as it answered the intentions of their ingenious examiners.

To heighten the effect, a coloured drawing was, as before mentioned, produced in court and shown to the jury, just, as Mr. Garrow *innocently* remarked, "by way of explaining the instrument of torture, and to show how and in what manner she was placed upon it;" while, he observed to the noble and learned lord on the bench, PRIVATELY,—that is to say, in a whisper which was intended to be heard by no one else in court *excepting the jury*,—"I wish your lord-

ship could have seen the *involuntary* expression of the witnesses' sensations upon looking at the drawing." Then this admirable pleader, upon being charged by the counsel for the defence with making use of unfair means in the prosecution of his case, afterwards said, in his address to the jury, "Gentlemen, with respect to the picture which has been stated to have inflamed your minds, I ask nothing of your passions;"—precisely like knocking a man down, and then, finding the offended party not strong enough to resist the injury, saying, "I ask nothing of your forbearance." In justice, however, to the able and learned lord on the bench, it must be admitted that he signified in strong language his disapprobation of "such tricks" as the introduction of the obnoxious drawing into court, at the same time that he expressed a hope that "no use would be made of it out of doors,"—with what effect has already been shown.

Another little *jeu d'esprit* of this "garrulous" Mr. Garrow, as Colonel Draper facetiously calls him, was the witticism already alluded to of changing the appellation of picketing for, as he observed, the more appropriate and elegant one

of *Pictoning*. In fact, every artifice that could amuse, harrow up the feelings, or impose upon the understandings of the jury, was by turns employed to obtain from them a verdict which should convince the British public that Governor Picton was guilty of every enormity which was laid to his charge, and that his accusers were actuated solely by feelings of humanity and a love of justice.

CHAPTER IX.

Summary of facts extracted from the evidence. — Perjured Witness.—Malicious insinuation.—Strong evidence against the truth of the charges. — Mr. Garrow's ingenuity. — Verdict.

But it is now time to give a brief outline of the proceedings up to this period; and as all the statements here made are from the authenticated documents brought forward in evidence, it is unnecessary to re-state the authorities and precise words in which they are expressed. First then—

Colonel Picton was directed by Sir Ralph Abercromby and his Majesty's commission to govern the island according to the laws in force at the time of its capitulation, with certain discretionary powers to simplify and accelerate the proceedings. On the 7th of December 1801, (nearly four years after Colonel Picton's appointment,) one Pedro Ruiz, an honest in-

dustrious man, who sold tobacco, appeared in the government court at Trinidad, and complained that the lock of one of his trunks had been broken, and that he had been robbed of two thousand hard dollars in specie (four hundred pounds sterling). Luise Calderon, the interesting subject of the people of England's philanthropy, and of this prosecution, was his mistress and housekeeper; having lived with him, according to her own statement on oath, "*between two years and a half and three years at the time of the robbery.*"

A young married man, named Carlos Gonzales, was at the time in habits of intimacy with this Luise Calderon, and had been seen to enter the house during the absence of Pedro Ruiz the same day upon which the money was stolen. In consequence of the deposition thus made, his excellency the governor directed Señor Hilariot Begorrat, the alcalde in ordinary, "*to prosecute*" this case, in order to discover the offender or offenders, that he or they might be brought to justice; in the same manner as any English magistrate is instructed to trace out and apprehend the guilty parties

concerned in any offence against the laws. Luise Calderon and Carlos were immediately taken into custody, and examined separately; but both denied the whole charge, or that they had ever had an intrigue: and the female prisoner, upon being again interrogated, disowned knowing who were the perpetrators of the robbery.

In consequence of this obstinacy in disavowing all knowledge of the transaction, and the strong suspicions existing against both the prisoners, the alcalde was desirous of proceeding according to the Spanish laws to extort confession by means of a slight torture; but, finding that he had not power to inflict this punishment without the sanction of the governor, he caused to be prepared by a notary the following document.

"Official communication of his honour the alcalde of the first election, to his excellency Governor Picton, December the 23rd, 1801.

"In consequence of the strong suspicions his honour entertains of the mulatto Luise Calde-

ron, a domestic of Pedro Ruiz, concealing the truth relative to the aforesaid robbery expressed in these proceedings, and his honour being persuaded that she will discover the truth of the matter by means of a slight torture inflicted on the said Calderon; and whereas his honour is not invested with power to execute the same, his excellency the governor and captain-general of this island must be made acquainted hereof, with the summary of this process, by virtue of this document, to the intent that his excellency may determine as may appear to him justice. The usual and requisite forms to be adopted and observed by the notary in this cause, and in pursuance hereof, his honour thus decreed and ordered; and he signed hereto, which I the under-written notary attest this day, the 22nd of the aforesaid month and year.

"Before me, FRANCISCO DE CASTRO.

(Signed) "BEGORRAT."

Upon this representation, and after Governor Picton had been made acquainted by the above-mentioned notary with the usual mode of proceeding upon such occasions according to the

laws of the island,* he inquired of the notary in what manner he should word the sentence which was applied for by the alcalde; upon which the notary wrote to the following effect, for the governor to sign,—

"Appliquez la question à Luise Calderon.

"TH. PICTON."

(In English)

"Apply the question (or torture) to Luise Calderon.

"TH. PICTON."

* Extracted from the *Recopilacion of Castile* and the *Partidas.*

"The question of torment is to be applied for confirmation and proof, there not being sufficient."

Curia Philipica, No. 2, fol. 229.

"In the same crimes for which the question is applicable to the delinquent, in the same it is applicable to the witness who varies or prevaricates in his evidence, or who denies the truth, or who refuses to declare it, there being a presumption that he knows it; not being of those persons to whom the torment cannot be applied according to the law of Partida and its Gregorian glossary."

Curia Philipica, No. 4, fol. 229.

"And in the same crimes for which the torment is applicable to the delinquent, in case an evidence of low vile character and bad morals is admitted, he is to testify under torment; otherwise his evidence is of no validity."

Law de Partida.

In order, however, if possible, to save the prisoner from this infliction, the notary, in the presence of the alcalde, caused her to be brought into a private room, where she was made acquainted with the above order, and that it would immediately be put in force unless she confessed what she knew respecting the offence; but she again said "*that she did not know who had committed the robbery on Pedro Ruiz;*" when, upon her still persisting in a denial, the picket was had recourse to. This operation is effected by making the prisoner stand upon a piece of wood about five or six inches long, and one inch, or one inch and a quarter square, with a flat top. By the laws of the island, a strongly suspected person might be made to remain upon this for any time not exceeding an hour, unless willing to make confession.

At first the prisoner appeared resolute in her determination to be silent, but after a little time she acknowledged that she had submitted to the wishes of Carlos Gonzales, and that it was he who had stolen the money from the house of Ruiz; but she denied knowing where he had deposited it, or having received any portion thereof. She was then confronted with

Gonzales, when she charged him with being the person who had committed the robbery; but he contradicted the accusation, and said that it was false testimony. He nevertheless fell upon his knees before all the witnesses, and acknowledged having been intimate with Luise Calderon for about four months, and that he had visited her upon the day on which the robbery had been perpetrated, having before sworn that such had never been the case.

It is well known that few countries enjoy the inestimable advantages of "*trial by jury*:" some it is true aim at our boasted privilege, but so imperfectly that it can hardly be recognised as the same principle. In Spain, however, the course of justice is totally different. The deposition on oath of witnesses in private, or confronted one with another, and even the extorted confession of the accused, are the only testimonies which are sought for; these are, with certain forms and solemnities, laid before the "superior tribunal," the power of which in this instance was concentrated in the governor, who, upon a strict examination of the different affidavits, decreed that Carlos Gonzales was guilty of the robbery. He was in consequence

condemned, according to the laws of Spain enacted for the punishment of the like description of offence; his sentence being as follows:—

"Perpetual banishment from the island; to pay a fine of one thousand eight hundred dollars; to pay all the costs of the process, and to labour on the public works until the term of this his sentence shall be fulfilled: which said fine to indemnify the said Pedro Ruiz. And the mulatto Luise Calderon shall be set at liberty, and considered to have expiated the offence by the long imprisonment she has suffered.

(Signed) "TH. PICTON."

This is a brief but faithful outline of the facts upon which Governor Picton was accused and found guilty; and natural enough it was that such should be the verdict of the jury. General Picton was charged with "*unlawfully inflicting the torture on Luise Calderon.*" Mr Garrow and his witness proved to the satisfaction of the court that there was no law in the island which warranted such a punishment, and the verdict could not therefore be otherwise. But if the reader has patience to follow the proceedings a little further, he will perceive

that an entire acquittal from the only portion of the charge upon which General Picton was found guilty was inevitable. Before, however, entering upon this final point of the proceedings, it may be advisable to show briefly in how far the charges made by Mr. Commissioner Fullarton were borne out by the witnesses for the prosecution.

In the first place, just to evince how ready the accuser was to distort facts for the cause of *justice* and *humanity*, Luise Calderon *was not* under fourteen years of age.* A reverend and holy curate of the Roman Catholic church, by name Josef Maria Angeles, was examined respecting the registry of baptism: he produced a certificate, which, according to his testimony, was extracted from the registry-book, and which set forth that Luise Calderon was born the 25th of August 1788; but as he first stated that the entry was made by himself "*three*

* By the laws of Spain, no person under the age of fourteen can be made subject to the "question;" consequently, the indictment being thus framed, compelled the defendant to bring evidence to prove the exact age of the girl, or submit to be found guilty upon this count; which would, in fact, alone have been sufficient for the judge to direct a verdict of guilty.

months after the baptism of the child," and then upon the same question being again asked, when he had forgotten his former answer, he said he "*believed it was a year or more,*" the court very properly determined he was not to be believed upon his oath: and the end of this respectable witness was, that he was removed from his sacerdotal office by the vicar-general, and ultimately found guilty of forgery and perjury.

Another certificate was however obtained from the Vicar-general Alvarado, which specified that the aforesaid Luise was an infant and baptised by him "on the 6th day of September 1786:" the truth of this was confirmed by witnesses who had seen her in her mother's arms at the latter end of the year 1786, by the evidence of the mother herself, by her own confession, and that of Pedro Ruiz, her late master. Luise Calderon was therefore proved to have been *above fifteen* when the "question" was applied; and *this* the court believed.

The insidious remark that "*Pedro Ruiz was stated to have been frequently employed as an agent by General Picton*" was another proof of the vindictive feeling which induced Mr. Fullarton to

come forward as the champion of outraged humanity. It had no bearing upon the case whatever, and was employed only as an aggravation, or rather indirect aspersion on the character of the defendant. One witness was however examined respecting the implied sinister agency of Pedro Ruiz; but nothing further could be elicited than that General Picton had occasionally bought mules and cattle from the said Ruiz, but which had been paid for immediately upon delivery.

After this mischievous insinuation, comes the false and iniquitous statement, or rather report; for all through the charge much caution is employed by Mr. Fullarton not to commit himself by a direct assertion, and the words "*stated to have been*" are constantly recurring:—"The torture is '*stated to have been*' applied two successive times with so much severity, that the girl fell down in appearance dead, and there was no physician or surgeon to assist."

In reply to this gross and palpable misstatement, let the reader for one moment turn to the evidence, and then ask himself whether the motive for this prosecution was *all humanity?* The picket has already been described, and the

manner of its use; but observe its effects upon the prisoner as proved by the evidence: "Her feet were not swollen." "No surgeon or medical man was called for by her or others; neither was the attendance of one necessary." "She did not cry out at all." "After the punishment and confession, *she walked from the gaol to the house of Pedro Ruiz, a distance of fifteen hundred paces,* when she showed how Carlos had taken the trunk, brought it to the door, broken the padlock, and taken away the money; she all the while smoking a cigar; after which she walked back to the gaol as if she had suffered no pain whatever:" while, as a conclusion, the chief alcalde stated, "that, as he considered the picket in gaol a very slight torture compared with those employed in Spain, he ordered it in preference to Luise Calderon." But this, be it remembered, was in answer to Mr. Garrow's ingenious but outrageously impudent assertion, that, "so far from Governor Picton having found torture in daily use under former governors—so far from his being bound by any circumstances of necessity to inflict it, he has all the merit of the invention."

The evidence now stood thus: that General Picton, being governor of Trinidad, and being charged to administer the Spanish laws, had caused something that may be termed a torture to be inflicted upon a girl above fifteen years old. That this act was in perfect accordance with those laws we have already shown. Any attempt to extort a confession is so abhorrent to our English ideas of justice, that the mere mention of an instrument of torture is sufficient to draw a cry of indignation from any assembly of our countrymen; and rightly so, for such an attempt is as absurd as it is cruel. But General Picton was not administering justice in a peaceful state; his task was to keep a conquered island. The population were turbulent and disaffected, and General Picton's force was small. In such a case every mitigation of severity is interpreted as an admission of weakness; and although we must regret, as General Picton undoubtedly also regretted, that his duty forced upon him the infliction of severities, unknown in England because unnecessary, yet we must admit that he was morally justified by the exigencies of his

situation, and certainly legally justified by the letter of his instructions.

The case being in this dilemma, nothing but the ingenuity or effrontery of Mr. Garrow could have obtained for the prosecutors a verdict. The jury were bewildered; they came into court with strong feelings against the accused, as juries often do: in fact, they were to pass judgment in the name of the people of England upon "a bloody and inhuman governor," who, according to the opening address of Mr. Garrow, "without the least pretence of law, without the least moral justification, but solely to gratify his tyrannical disposition by the oppression of the unfortunate and defenceless victim of his cruelty," did all that he had been trying to make them believe: but the fact was, these twelve honest but incredulous men COULD NOT believe both him and the witnesses, so they confined their belief solely to the latter; and had they decided upon "the merits" only, they would beyond a doubt have given their unhesitating verdict in favour of justice.

But that able advocate Mr. Garrow was not so easily to be defeated: what was justice to him? —he wanted to gain his cause. Still, what was

to be done? the obstinate jury would not believe his reiterated asseverations, that "Governor Picton had maliciously, wantonly, and to gratify a tyrannical disposition, subjected an interesting young Spanish girl under fourteen years of age to torture until she fell down in appearance dead."* Not a word of all this could Mr. Garrow persuade the jury to believe; but, happy thought!—law!—they must believe his law; and accordingly he asserted, and brought a witness named Vargas, alias Smith, to swear, that the old Castilian Spanish laws were not in force at the time of the conquest of the island by Sir Ralph Abercromby, and, consequently, that punishing an offender according to that code was unlawful. This he told

* The following fact is rather an amusing illustration of the overdone efforts of General Picton's accusers. It is contained in a letter from a gentleman in Trinidad, who had just returned from Scotland.

"A few weeks before I last left Scotland, Mr. Fullarton arrived with his family from Trinidad: at that moment I was in Ayrshire, and mixed with several of his friends; and dining one day at the lord provost's (mayor's) house in Ayr, mark my astonishment when I was told that, along with Colonel Fullarton, there had arrived with his lady a "Mademoiselle Luise Calderon," whom the Colonel and Mrs. Fullarton paraded about with them in their carriage, introducing her *wherever* they went as the "*blessed*

the judge, who could not contradict him, or his respectable witness; the defendant's counsel was unprepared for so barefaced an assertion, and Colonel Draper says: "I sat near Mr. Garrow. He astonished me! The noble and learned judge heard him, — what shall I say? he believed him! — the jury of course believed him, and they found accordingly — a general verdict of guilty."

innocent" who was the devoted victim of Colonel Picton's tyranny, &c. (Signed) "JOHN DOWNIE."

"Trinidad, September 8th, 1805."

The introduction of Miss Luise into such good society might have been exceedingly agreeable to all parties; but as the ladies of Scotland are rather famous for their uncompromising sense of decorum, it seems strange that they should have exposed themselves to the contaminating influence of a young lady who, by her voluntary statement, was a very improper person to associate with modest ladies; while, by her extorted confession, she acknowledged herself to be, if not a thief, at least an accomplice.

CHAPTER X.

Effects of the Verdict upon the friends of each party.—General Picton's Letter to Sir Samuel Hood.

THUS far, then, Colonel Fullarton, his friends, and the majority of the public, were victorious; justice was appeased, the measure of punishment was left to the discretion of the judges; and to this day many of those who remember Governor Picton being tried and found guilty of "*unlawfully picketing an interesting Spanish girl under fourteen years of age*," do not know that ever any further proceedings were taken for his vindication. One reason for this strange ignorance is, that they never took the trouble to inquire, but, with a laudable love of justice but too general, remained contented, not to say pleased, with the

knowledge that an individual holding a high and respectable situation had been reduced to a level something below that of the party making him the subject of his reflections.

General Picton was thus found guilty of permitting an "unlawful punishment" to be inflicted on Luise Calderon: as an English judge might so far outstretch, or be ignorant of the laws which he had to administer, as to order a prisoner convicted of a capital crime to be decapitated instead of hanged,—*that* would be unlawful punishment.

The enemies of General Picton were not, however, quite contented with the manner in which this verdict had been obtained, as it was too evident that nothing but the unexpected assertion of Mr. Garrow could have succeeded in getting any; while Colonel Fullarton anticipated that the termination of this prosecution would confirm or give probability to the calumnious accusations with which he had charged the defendant.

But General Picton and his friends were even less pleased than his accusers with the result of this trial; an entire acquittal was confidently anticipated; and as the simple verdict

of "guilty" embraced the whole of the charges, although it was evident to all the world, who chose to take the trouble to inquire, that none of them were proved, still it involved the defendant in every disagreeable attendant upon a similar verdict founded upon the most perfect and comprehensive evidence. "Humanity is satisfied;" so said Colonel Fullarton, when informed that the jury had found his victim "guilty." "But I am not," he might have added: for his actions proved that nothing but the total ruin of both General Picton's name and fortune would satisfy him. The subject was not allowed to drop, although humanity *was* satisfied: pamphlets, caricatures, and newspaper insinuations were constantly employed; all that the legal inquiry had failed to prove, it was attempted to wind around the senses of men by artful and repeated misstatements; while to those whose judgments were too strong to be thus imposed upon, falsehood was had recourse to, assisted by appeals to their passions, to join in the universal outcry against this "inhuman oppressor of youth and innocence." *

* Lieutenant-colonel Draper, in his spirited and able

From this picture of artifice trying to impose upon justice by assuming the garb of humanity, let the reader turn to the following letter, written at this period by General Picton to Commodore Sir Samuel Hood.

"London, March 1, 1806.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I doubt not but you will do me the justice to believe that the inventions of malice and the credulity of ignorance are equally unable to affect my mind or influence my conduct in any situation or circumstances of life; or that the indecent caricatures exhibited everywhere in the streets and windows, and the malignant, scandalous libels which have inundated the metropolis, to outrage truth, and to corrupt the sources of public justice, will neither succeed in alarming my apprehensions, nor irritating my disposition. Yet I am very far from despising the judg-

Address to the British Public, published in 1806, says, with almost prophetic truth, "The zeal, abilities, and acknowledged integrity of Colonel Picton will survive these unworthy and unjust aspersions; and he will live, I trust, to add still more to the fame, wealth, and honour of a just and generous nation."

ment of the public; on the contrary, no one possesses a higher veneration for it, when calmly and coolly exercised: but, to have any value in my mind, it must proceed from the operation of reason, and be the result of temperate investigation.

"The reputation which rests upon the solid foundation of honourable services and zealous devotion to the cause of our country, is an object of virtuous ambition to which no well-ordered mind can ever be insensible; it is the shadow which accompanies the solid substance of meritorious actions, and the evidence of their existence,—it is the only genuine source of popularity; and the public opinion which rests upon any other foundation, or is derived from any other cause, though it may for a time serve the purposes of faction and intrigue, will ever be esteemed by prudent and deserving persons as a counterfeit coin, and spurious imitation of the more precious metal.

"The inhabitants of this country possess, perhaps, more of the milk of human kindness than those of any other nation in the world; they are more feelingly alive to every tale of woe or oppression; and these amiable qualities

are, in a great measure, the cause of their being so open to the impositions and *canting hypocrisy of pretended philanthropists:* but they have invariably a fund of sound sense at bottom, which will never allow any delusion to be of long duration. Such a public, when the first impression begins to subside, will naturally inquire into the causes and motives of appeals to their passions; and when an apparently public object is pursued and pressed upon them with all the rancour and animosity of private interest and resentment, they will not be slow in suspecting some concealed selfish motive lurking beneath the specious patriotic pretext.

"This hypocrisy of patriotism, like that of religion, has always been most successful in its impositions upon people of ingenuous and candid dispositions. But, even with them, the age of delusion is nearly over; and extravagant pretensions, either to the one or the other, have fallen everywhere into merited suspicion. It is, however, much to be lamented that the great principles upon which the well-being of all civil as well as political societies rest, have been much weakened in the estimation of the world from the interested and selfish motives

by which their appearances have been urged, and the still more interested objects to which those unprincipled and designing impostors have directed them.

"These reflections naturally lead to a consideration of the indefensible means employed to impose upon the credulity of the public in my case, and to make them the tools and instruments of private passion and resentment. You are too well acquainted with the corrupt sources from which they emanate to feel any astonishment at the impudence with which they have been employed: the puppet-show men may conceal themselves behind the curtain, but no one is ignorant of the hand which touches the strings and the wires, and sets the men of straw in motion. I need not here recall to your mind the circumstances which led to our resignation as two of his Majesty's commissioners for the government of Trinidad: they are of too extraordinary a nature not to be permanently fixed in your recollection without any effort of mine to renew the impression. My resignation, you well remember, was readily and easily admitted; and whatever the pretext might be, I believe you had no difficulty in penetrating the

reasons why *yours*, though urged with more strength, met with a different reception.

"The disagreements amongst the commissioners produced at least one good consequence, as they led to the abolition of a chimerical system of government, which has realized the apprehensions of every practical statesman, by producing an infinity of evil, and no one advantage, except a convincing proof of its impracticability, which may deter future theoretical politicians from attempting a similar incongruity.

"Amongst a variety of means, equally honourable to the heads and hearts of the contrivers, a specious appeal has been made to the humanity and passions of the public in favour of a common mulatto girl, of the vilest class and most corrupt morals, who, living in the confidence and under the protection of an industrious tradesman, formed an illicit connexion with a negro, who robbed him, with her concurrence, of the whole earnings of a life of industrious parsimony, amounting to nearly five hundred pounds sterling.

"*This respectable personage;* who was guilty of the most flagrant perjury upon her exami-

nations, was proceeded against before the ordinary magistrates of the colony according to due course of law, and nothing but mistaken lenity saved her from an ignominious death upon the gallows. Such is the person who has been selected to act the part of a most virtuous, interesting *young lady*, whose sufferings have been painted in such glowing colours to the public; and who, at the very time she was fixed upon as the heroine of this mountebank exhibition, was living under the impression that she had been treated with peculiar mildness by the remission of the punishment ordained by the laws for a crime of such complicated villany.

"In consequence of circumstances connected with the above transaction, an indictment having been preferred against me in the Court of King's Bench, I was under the necessity of applying for a mandamus to examine evidence in Trinidad, the result of which I now lay before the public (faithfully copied from the official returns), in order that they may have the means of detecting the artifices which have been practised upon their passions to mislead their judgments; and I have chosen to address

it to you, sir, as a testimony of the high veneration and esteem which I entertain for your character, public and private, and as a mark of the inappreciable value I place upon a friendship which commenced under circumstances of a most trying nature, and grew up amongst difficulties. You, sir, had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the sentiments and opinions of all the respectable inhabitants and proprietors of a colony I had governed for so many years, without instructions, advice, or assistance.

"Did you ever learn any circumstances, during your official residence in that country, which could lead you to suspect anything discreditable to my character as a public or private man, in my civil or military capacities? I may boldly venture to say, no; or I never should have been honoured with your confidence and friendship.

"In my public situation, as chief of the civil and military departments in a newly-conquered country, possessing great discretionary power without any accurate limit or definition, I am conscious that I at all times and on all occasions faithfully performed my public duty to the

full extent of my abilities. Whether I am entitled to any degree of credit or not, is scarcely worth inquiry: I am not asking for any rewards, therefore it will be superfluous to ascertain the value of my claims; all that I am solicitous of establishing is, that I have, on all occasions, done what I considered most conformable to my public obligations, without any respect to private passion or individual interest: a position which I confidently trust *no man of truth and honour*, who had an opportunity of witnessing and examining my conduct, will be inclined to contest or dispute with me.

"You see, sir, my claims upon the public are not extravagant or unreasonable: I neither claim rewards for my past services, nor challenge credit for great talents and extraordinary moral powers to operate wonders in their cause for the future. I make no such pretensions; but I have a right to demand a presumption that the moderate share or portion of talents which they are willing to allow me was employed zealously and honestly, to the best of my judgment. Such is the extent of my claims upon the public, and to which the strongest testimony has been borne by every one of the high autho-

rities I acted under during the whole of my civil and military employments.

"You well know, sir, that I was placed, without any solicitation, as a matter of professional duty, in a most extraordinary situation; at the head of a new conquest, without any legal adviser to guide me in the administration of an intricate system of foreign laws, written in a foreign language, without any magistrate legally constituted or acquainted with the jurisprudence of the country to execute them; without any law-books, except such as I could casually pick up upon the spot; without any council with whom I could share the responsibility, and without any detailed instructions to supply the deficiency: and that, so situated, I was left, nearly six years, solely to my own judgment and discretion, to carry on the business of the colony in the best manner I could. Thus circumstanced, what more could reasonably be expected of me than that I should act honestly, to the extent of my abilities, with the best advice I could procure in the place? How is it possible that I could become acquainted with the laws, or the practice of them, except from the books within my

reach, and the magistrates who were most accustomed to their application? I did guide myself on this, as well as on every other occasion, by the advice of the magistrates and other law-officers, the only sources of legal information or practice; and if more was required of me, I am ready to confess I am not capable of impossibilities.

"However, sir, if I were to estimate my merits in so novel a situation by the assurances of confidence and approbation which I continued officially to receive from the high authorities under which I acted up to the very moment of my resignation, I might allow myself to indulge in very considerable claims and pretensions, without incurring a charge of extravagance: but I have learned to estimate such assurances by the consequences which have followed them, and which it is not within the bounds of probability that I shall early or easily forget.

"I trust that the English people are too reasonable to require of me more than they would of any other person of moderate abilities under similar circumstances. Let any one of them suppose himself posted where I was, without

any solicitation or intrigue on his part; would he be satisfied to be placed in the midst of darkness, and then punished for not seeing clearly? I am ordered to administer an intricate system of laws, of which I am totally ignorant, and then I am made accountable for the errors I involuntarily committed; and criminally prosecuted for what I could not possibly avoid.

"If my deviations, indeed, proceeded from corrupt or malicious motives, the people of England would have a right to exact a severe and rigid account of them: they would not do justice to themselves, and to the character of the British nation, if they did not; and I am ready to acknowledge that, in such a case, I should have nothing to plead in my defence.

"The simple fact is, there were great difficulties in making any arrangements for the administration of a conquest, the circumstances and population of which they were not sufficiently acquainted with; and the only expedient they could have recourse to in order to get rid of the embarrassment was by throwing it upon me, confiding the remedy to my judgment and discretion. I did not shrink from the task, how-

ever difficult; and my obedience was at least a strong proof of my zeal for his Majesty's service, and my confidence in the authorities I acted under; if not of my prudence and discretion. It is true, I took a great responsibility upon myself. I could not move a step in the public service without incurring serious responsibility, which was imperiously forced on me by circumstances; and it was incurred honestly, honourably, and disinterestedly, in the service of the public, without any possible advantage to myself. It was a sacrifice I made of personal interest and personal safety, which entitles me to some consideration, both from the public and the departments of government with which I was connected, though I never made any claim upon either.

"I never made any claim: but my forbearance does not exonerate *them* from a performance of their public duty; it rather increases the obligation. Those authorities know that I did my best, and probably as well as any man could have done in my situation. In the face of the people of England, I confidently say, that they know, from every source of credible information, from all the distinguished public

characters with whom I was in relation, civil or military, in the different confidential situations I was employed in, that I invariably sacrificed every private consideration and personal interest to my high, perhaps Quixotic, idea of public duty. They know that agriculture, that commerce, that the public revenues, increased and flourished under my administration to an extent scarcely to be expected, considering the unfavourable circumstances under which the colony was placed; that the public expenses were narrowed within the bounds of the most rigid economy; and *that the whole disbursements of the colony were not only provided for without a single call upon the Treasury, but that a large sum had been economised, and laid up in the colonial chest, as a resource for any extraordinary emergency.*

"Neither you, sir, nor his Majesty's ministers are ignorant of what has become of that *large sum*, nor what extraordinary calls have been made upon the treasury of this country in consequence of its sudden dissipation. They know that I applied the revenues and administered the laws of the country honestly and impartially, to the best of my abilities; and they

are not ignorant that I sacrificed all fees and emoluments, to a large annual amount, (and to which I had an unquestionable right,) to promote the interests of commerce, and of his Majesty's government. And yet, what have I not been exposed to? To every species of indignity; to expenses ruinous to any officer in his Majesty's service, whatever his rank might be; and to circumstances, the effects of which are calculated to damp the ardour and cool the zeal of every public servant who may be similarly situated.

"I am not of a contentious spirit either in public or private life; and there are few who have been more disposed to make sacrifices to concord than I, on all occasions when the essential duties of my public situations would allow me to follow the natural bent of my inclination. With such a disposition, during my long service I had the happiness to steer clear of all misunderstandings and contentions, as well with the chiefs under whose immediate orders I acted, as with all those with whom it was my duty to co-operate in promoting the public service; and I had a fair prospect of being enabled to end my public career without a single

serious disagreement, when an event, which it was impossible to expect or foresee, exposed me to circumstances which rendered all prudence nugatory.

"His Majesty had been graciously pleased, without any solicitation on my part, as a spontaneous act of royal favour, to appoint me to the high and confidential situation of Governor and Commander-in-chief of Trinidad, expressly as a reward for my former services as military commandant of that important colony. Amidst the strongest official assurances of the fullest confidence and approbation of the measures which I had pursued in this high station, without any previous communication, I was suddenly superseded, and appointed to a subordinate situation in the same government, without my consent or even knowledge. Humiliating as my position became, thus degraded in the eyes of the world, it being signified to me as the express command of my sovereign, I did not hesitate a moment to obey, and in so doing I gave the strongest proof of my devotion to his royal will, by a sacrifice of every feeling; in consequence of which I have been exposed to

a series of wicked machinations, such as no man ever before experienced.

"But to return to the subject from which I have insensibly strayed. The most wicked and indefensible means have been made use of to pre-occupy the public mind with opinions unfavourable to me, at a time when a cause of the utmost importance to my character is pending in the Court of King's Bench; a conduct the more atrocious, as it is manifestly calculated to deprive me of a fair, impartial trial, by influencing the passions of those who eventually are to be my judges; an attempt which, I trust confidently, the people of this country will not see without indignation.

"All I ask of them is, what religion and morality equally require as indispensable duties; that they abstain from rash, premature judgment, and wait until they fairly and fully hear both sides of the question, before they give their verdict against an officer who has been serving them with zeal and fidelity for nearly thirty-seven years. I solicit no rewards, I ask no favours; but I demand, as a right, what they cannot refuse me without injustice,—an

impartial hearing, and a suspension of judgment until the final issue of the new trial for which I am about to move.

"With many apologies for the length of my intrusion,

"I am, &c. &c.

"THOMAS PICTON."

"Sir Samuel Hood, K.B."

CHAPTER XI.

Motion for a new trial "made absolute."—Investigation in the Privy Council brought to a conclusion.—Their Report.—Remarks upon.—A second issued.—Sir Samuel Hood offers himself as a Candidate for Westminster.—Colonel Fullarton's attack.—"The Picton Veil, or, The Hood of Westminster," a poem.—The Duke of Queensberry.—His munificent offer to General Picton.

THE calm and elevated tone of this letter forms a striking contrast to the vindictive and low-minded expressions of his enemies: it breathes throughout a noble contempt for the senseless outcry of the mob, and a laudable desire for the good opinion of the just and dispassionate public. Such sentiments would have done honour to a Roman patriot; and if we were called upon to portray the character of Sir Thomas Picton by any single act of his life, we would turn to this letter, in the confident assurance that the expressions which it contains are the sincere emanations of

a dignified and virtuous mind. The efforts of General Picton's accusers were, however, unfortunately too successful: the public attention was so constantly directed to the "*guilty* and *blood-stained governor*," that, by the frequency of the accusations, the minds of even the most just gradually fell into a tacit belief that they were all true; until at length, according to a periodical of the time, "the name of Picton was made use of to frighten children."

When once conviction of another's guilt has taken possession of the mind, all attempts at vindication are unavailing: the individual is contented with having arrived at a conclusion, and if that opinion be unfavourable, he will never take the trouble to be convinced to the contrary. So, in the present instance, the jury found Governor Picton guilty; pamphlets and the newspapers assured the public that he was, — and in consequence he has ever since been spoken of as "*cruel*" and "*remorseless*." But let posterity do him justice. Men will now read to judge; and it is hoped that his memory will no longer be tarnished by even a whisper of reproach.

On the 26th of April 1806, Mr. Dallas, in

an elaborate and powerful speech before Lord Ellenborough and three judges, moved for a rule to show cause why there should not be a new trial in the case of the King *versus* Picton.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the whole of the arguments employed by this able advocate, more especially as they are already in print. He grounded the application upon two points: the first, "That in the evidence on which the verdict was founded, there was a gross misrepresentation of a most material fact," (in allusion to the non-existence of the old Castilian laws, as asserted by Mr. Garrow,)—"'a fact' so material as to constitute in one respect the very ground and foundation of the charge; and that this misrepresentation took place under such circumstances as rendered it impossible for General Picton, or those who had to conduct his defence, to have foreseen, or to have been guarded against it by the exertion of any care or diligence on their part." The second ground was thus stated;—"Supposing your lordships should be of opinion (even now) that the only fact found by the jury was correctly found, still on this indictment the defendant is and ought to have been acquitted, inasmuch as the

act complained of was done in the course of his judicial duty—not maliciously, but erroneously done, and therefore not the subject of any civil suit, and still less of a criminal prosecution."

Mr. Dallas proved, to the entire satisfaction of the judges, "that what the witness Vargas, *alias* Smith, swore, was *literally* true, but substantially and *virtually* false;" that "the law of Old Spain, which is the law of Castile, *was* in force in the island of Trinidad at the time of its capitulation;" that "Colonel Picton was instructed both by Sir Ralph Abercromby and his Majesty's government to administer the laws which he found in the island;" and that "the punishment inflicted on Luise Calderon was in perfect accordance with those laws."

Upon these statements, which were drawn from the most able authorities and supported by the clearest evidence, the court had no alternative, as the very argument by which the verdict had been obtained was negatived; and, according to the legal phrase, the rule for a new trial "was made absolute."

It was during these legal proceedings that the Privy Council was engaged in investigating an endless list of enormities said to have been

committed by Governor Picton during his administration in Trinidad. The result of this judicial inquiry was of more vital importance to the future prospects of the general than the decision of the law-court; for, if one tenth part of the charges brought by Colonel Fullarton before that honourable assembly were established, the loss of his military rank, and the infliction of some heavy fine or punishment, would destroy at once both his fortune and character. Long and patient was this investigation: every shadow of proof was brought forward in support of the accusations; affidavits and witnesses being obtained at any expense, to prove the persecuted object of Colonel Fullarton's hatred guilty.

The defence which General Picton was enabled to advance would not have sufficed in a court of law: the variety of the charges defied the utmost assiduity to procure evidence entirely to rebut them; but to the impartial and liberal feelings of gentlemen, where there was no professional art to mislead their judgments, such evidence was sufficient: upon the affidavits of individuals of the highest respectability in the island of Trinidad, who distinctly swore to

the injustice of many of the principal charges, together with the exalted character borne by General Picton, with perhaps a feeling amongst the members of the Privy Council that Colonel Fullarton was not actuated solely "by a love of justice, they acquitted the victim of his accusations."

In January 1807, nearly four years from the commencement of the inquiry, they at length made a report, the substance of which was, that "there was no foundation whatever for further proceedings on any of the numerous charges brought forward by Colonel Fullarton against General Picton."

A spirited periodical of the day observes upon this report,—"When we recollect that more than three years have elapsed since these charges were first submitted to the Privy Council; that they were pursued under three successive administrations; that they have of course undergone the fullest and most rigid investigation; and that the late sittings were attended by the different members who had marked the whole progress of the business;—we cannot, we confess, but feel for the deep humiliation of the rash accuser, who has thus been foiled in

every attempt, and who has reaped nothing but defeat and disappointment from his strenuous and unexampled efforts in the cause of *virtue, justice,* and *truth.*"

Shortly after this first report of the Privy Council, a second was published, in which the name of Sir Samuel Hood was introduced, in conjunction with that of General Picton, as having been charged with committing certain misdemeanours whilst commissioner of Trinidad. This report was, however, even more honourable to the accused than the former. The characters of both General Picton and Sir Samuel Hood came forth from this long and minute inquiry without a stain.

It was after this report had been issued by the Privy Council, that Sir Samuel Hood, the friend and companion of Picton, offered himself as a candidate to represent the city of Westminster in parliament. Upon this occasion Colonel Fullarton, not from any desire to serve the cause of the opposing parties, but solely to avenge himself on the hustings for the castigation which he had received from Sir Samuel Hood in the council at Trinidad, printed and published three folio pages, calling on the

gallant commodore to answer him two-and-twenty queries, most of them extracted from his charges against General Picton; such as, the "list of persons fettered, flogged, burned, &c.;"* and numerous others, in equally inflammatory and exciting language. But, as a conclusion to the chain of abuse and machination concocted by the friends and admirers of Colonel Fullarton, (we would not willingly believe that it was the production of the colonel's own pen,) a poem was published, called "The Picton Veil, or, the Hood of Westminster," which is unrivalled for malice and rancour.

This tissue of falsehoods, and the vilest accusations, was widely circulated amongst the nobility, and friends of both Sir Samuel Hood and General Picton. The best and noblest of the land are here vilified in the most foul and scurrilous language: the principal objects of the assassin's venom were the leading members of the Privy Council, and upon them he has lavished it with an unsparing hand. But as the writer is convinced that no adequate idea can be conveyed of this production by mere extracts, he has thought it advisable to give this precious *morceau* entire.

* Vide page 102.

THE PICTON VEIL;

OR,

THE HOOD OF WESTMINSTER.

See Grenville head the mighty troop
Of legal statesmen in a group;
Dimly he views them through his glass,*
And drills his followers as they pass.
The outward vision, true, 'tis dark;
But had great justice' vital spark
Clear'd from dull mist the mental sight,
His conduct then had stood the light.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

And lo! where, humbled in the dust,
Sits him who holds the sacred trust,
Keeper of conscience to his king!
His own seems lost, no power to sting;
Or it had whisper'd in his ear:
Will 't thou a murd'rer dare to clear,
And plead to the Great Judge of all,
That, to obey proud Grenville's call,
Justice and mercy both must fall?
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

Next Eldon comes, of palsied mind,
But half to good or ill inclined.
Still, not like Erskine did he yield;
For three whole years he kept the field,
Feebly held justice with a straw,
Nor sanction'd murder by a law.
It bodes our country little good,
When crimes are cover'd by a Hood.

* Lord Grenville wore spectacles.

Sidmouth, who at the board presides,
By Grenville's fiat he abides:
The Doctor's conscience feels no qualm,
An opiate has procured a calm.
'Tis Grenville must the risk endure,
Should too much blood require a cure.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

Anstruther also must attend
As Grenville's and Lord Wellesley's friend,
His part to shelter Eastern crimes;
Guilt he won't see in Western climes,
His principles must meet the times.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

Here follows a stiff legal plant,
Master of Rolls, Sir William Grant.
In politics tho' quite ajar,
He hopes to heal the recent scar,
If, yielding now to the great flood,
He helps to screen a man of blood.
In measured words and accents slow,
He sets at naught sad scenes of woe.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

See Castlereagh, with dauntless front,
Who in Hibernia bore the brunt
Of flogging, torturing without end,
In soul allied as Picton's friend:
No wonder he his voice should raise
To sound aloud a murd'rer's praise.
It bodes our country little good,
When crimes are cover'd by a Hood.

Recorded on the list of fame,
Spencer! high stood thy honour'd name;
Brought now to hide a culprit's shame,
Grenville has got thee join'd with knaves,
To turn free Britons into slaves,
Who under thee once ruled the waves.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

Say, Moira, by what ordinance
Dost thou with visage black advance?
'Tis fear has bound thee fast in chains,
Leads thee to shroud the ghost of Haynes,*
And with fresh guilt renew thy stains.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's covered by a Hood.

Windham, thy metaphysic mind,
That turns and twists, excuse can find
For baiting bulls, or human-kind;
Though great they call'd thee—yes, 'tis fact,
Now thou art dwindled down t' enact
Proud Grenville's purpose, or the Training Act.
It bodes our country little good,
When murder 's cover'd by a Hood.

Oh! Fullarton, the brave and good,
With noble firmness you withstood
Torture and waste of human blood:
Long may a God of mercy spare
Thy life unto thy country's prayer,
'Gainst tyrant foes to prove her shield,
Either in council or the field!

* Colonel Isaac Haynes, executed by Lord Rawdon, without trial, in America.

So justly fearful was the writer of this production of the odium and punishment which were his due, that not even the printer's name was attached to the libel, nor did he ever acknowledge the authorship.

A circumstance occurred about this time, connected with the subject of this memoir, which is well worthy of record, as a happy illustration of the character of an eccentric nobleman, the last Duke of Queensberry. The prosecution against General Picton was proceeding with all the rancour of party spirit, and the voice of the country was raised against him in an universal outcry. A few staunch friends, however, still clung to him; some of whom had had opportunities of witnessing his conduct in the West Indies, and others who knew him too well to believe for one moment the charges which were brought against him. These were yet unchanged, although assailed with reproach for holding communion with a man whom the world condemned.

During the progress of this prosecution, General Picton was one day dining at the Grosvenor Coffee-house, in company with some of these friends, when Colonel Dar-

ling, who highly honoured General Picton, and was intimate with the Duke of Queensberry, joined the party. After some general conversation, Colonel Darling observed, "Picton, I have just left the Duke of Queensberry, and he has charged me with a message for you."—"Indeed," replied Picton; "I am certainly much honoured, more especially as I never had the pleasure of being introduced to his grace."—"I know it," said the colonel; "but he has often spoken of you and your affairs in the most friendly and liberal manner."

General Picton expressed his sense of the honour conferred upon him by the duke. "And now," continued the colonel, "he wishes to show you his feelings with regard to the proceedings instituted against you, by a more decided mark of his consideration."

"What do you mean, Darling?" inquired the general with some surprise.

"Simply this," rejoined the colonel. "The duke has watched the whole course of your prosecution with much interest, and he has now desired me to express to you his entire conviction of your innocence, together with

the high sense which he entertains of your character." General Picton bowed in acknowledgment of this compliment.

"But that is not all," continued the colonel. "I have just parted with him; and, to be brief, he has desired me to say, that as he is aware of the great expenses which you must incur in defending yourself against a Government prosecution, and uncertain whether your fortune can support the heavy demands upon you, he is desirous that you should make him your banker during the remainder of the proceedings. He offers you the use of any sum under ten thousand pounds."

Picton was for a moment silent, for this mark of consideration from a stranger astonished him. He could not immediately express his feelings; but at length he expatiated with much earnestness on the munificent generosity of the duke, to whom he immediately wrote a brief note, afterwards handed to Colonel Darling for perusal. In this he stated how highly flattered he was by the opinion which his grace had expressed of him; while, in reference to his proffered munificence, he added, "Had it not been for the kindness and gene-

rosity of a near relation," (his uncle,) "who has lent me his fortune to defend my character, I should most readily have availed myself of your disinterested liberality. At present, I am in no want of pecuniary aid; but shall ever feel grateful for the considerate manner in which you offered me your assistance."

General Picton had no further communication with this eccentric but generous nobleman until two days before the departure of the general for the Peninsula. He was again at the Grosvenor Coffee-house, making preparations for his journey, when the Duke of Queensberry's card was brought in, with a request from his grace that he would oblige him by coming to his carriage at the door for one moment. The general immediately complied with his wish; when the duke, shaking him warmly by the hand, after having apologised on the ground of his infirmity for not getting out, observed:—

"General Picton, I have ventured out expressly to shake you by the hand, and bid you farewell before you leave the country; and there is one request which I have to make, and which I hope you will oblige me in."

The general expressed in warm terms the satisfaction which he should experience in obliging the duke in any possible manner.

"Well, then," observed the duke, "it is this: you know what vague and contradictory accounts we get in the newspapers about the proceedings of our army;—now, I want you to write me a letter occasionally—that is, whenever you can find leisure—just that I may know the truth."

General Picton promised to comply with his wishes, by sending him the particulars of every affair of importance. This he did punctually; and whenever a letter arrived from the general, the duke used always to observe, "Ah! this is a letter from Picton; now we shall have the truth." But he was not long one of General Picton's correspondents, as he died in December 1810, when, as a mark of the esteem in which he held the general, he left him a legacy of five thousand pounds.

CHAPTER XII

Second trial of General Picton.—Testimonials to his character and abilities.—Inhabitants of Trinidad present him with a sword.—Their magnificent subscription to defray the expenses of his trial.—The above sum generously returned by Picton.—Argument on a special verdict.

THE second trial of General Picton for the same offence was now approaching. All the intervening time he had borne the odium of being considered guilty, and, in addition to the enormous costs of his defence, all the injury arising from the necessary neglect of his profession which that defence occasioned.

The sole cause and originator of this extraordinary and tedious prosecution was, however, doomed not to see its termination, or the tardy justice which was at length rendered to the object of his persecution.

Early in February 1808, Colonel Fullarton was attacked by an inflammatory cold, which settled on his lungs, and on the 13th he expired. The outcry which had so long existed against General Picton, and which had been kept alive during the life of Colonel Fullarton, died with him. The public mind, no longer excited by slanderous accusations, at once subsided into calm judgment; and as the period for the second trial approached, not a remark was made which could in any way predispose the minds of his judges.

It must be remembered, that this prosecution being instituted at the suit of the King, the death of Colonel Fullarton did not at all interfere with the course of justice. It is true, that there no longer existed any strong feeling of personal animosity; but still the proceedings were conducted in the same form; the whole of the depositions of Colonel Fullarton were on record, and consequently justice lost nothing by the removal of this witness. There were still, however, some individuals who yet looked forward to his being again found guilty with satisfaction and even triumph; for the witnesses engaged on a trial generally

make the cause so much their own, that they often give their evidence with the rancour of personal enmity, apparently considering that to gain the verdict is to obtain a victory.

One incident, however, occurred to General Picton about this period, which for a while dispelled the gloom which his continued persecution, and the consciousness of existing under the undeserved execration of the public, had thrown over his character. This was his promotion to the rank of Major-general, which appeared in the Gazette of the 25th of April 1808. Professional fame and promotion were always to him the highest sources of personal gratification; and this testimony of approbation was particularly seasonable.

On the 11th of June his new trial came on before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury, when the evidence was again gone through at even a greater length. The testimonials to General Picton's character and abilities as governor given upon this occasion are so strong that a brief recital of them may not be considered out of place; these testimonials were all given on oath in answer to the question—

"Did you know Governor Picton, and what was his general character?"

The first witness was Don Hilario Begorrat, ordinary judge. His answer to the latter part of the question was—"Great integrity and disinterestedness; a man of knowledge and firmness, who saved the colony by his talents."

Colonel de Soter answered—"A character full of dignity, justice, activity, and generosity; beloved by the inhabitants, feared by all the disturbers of tranquillity, and generally considered as the founder of the colony."

Don Francisco de Farfan, a planter.—"He was a man, just, disinterested, and capable by his talents to govern all men."

Baron de Montalembert.—"I knew him intimately, and his character was the most honourable and most respected that a chief could desire to possess in his government. I wish to declare that I came to the island to settle in consequence of the honourable report of character and reputation that was made to me of Governor Picton by his Majesty's ministers, his Grace the Duke of Portland, and the Right Honourable H. Dundas."

Alexander Williams, Esq. a proprietor in

the island seventeen years.—"I knew him. His general character was that of an upright and just governor; and generally esteemed in the colony, particularly by the foreigners."

John Lynch, Esq. a proprietor for twelve years.—"I knew him from his first arrival as governor; and his general character was that of a very honest, upright man, esteemed by all good men of every country."

Chevalier de la Sauvager, formerly governor of Tobago.—"I knew him. His character was that of a man calculated to govern a colony, and knowing how to keep every man in his proper situation, and to render justice to all."

Benois Dert, Esq. a proprietor for twenty years.—"I knew Brigadier-general Picton. His character was that of a man who made himself feared and beloved by all."

Chevalier de Gannes, a proprietor for ten years.—"I knew him intimately. When I arrived in this colony, there were a number of very bad subjects in it, and it was threatened with a general subversion of good order. Brigadier-general Picton restored order, maintained the police, protected commerce and the importation of provisions, and tripled the value of land

in cultivation: I always knew him to be extremely just towards all the inhabitants of the colony, without any prejudice to any of the various foreigners in it."

Vincent Patrice, Esq. commandant of La Ventille.—"I knew General Picton. I consider that the capture of the island has restored tranquillity, and caused commerce and agriculture to flourish."

Count de Soppinott, proprietor for ten years. —"I knew Brigadier-general Picton as governor-in-chief of this island: I saw him govern with all dignity, loyalty, and perfect justice; with a firmness which secured the tranquillity of the colony, to the satisfaction of every honest man, and which repressed all the evil-minded persons in it."

Lazar Achard, Esq. proprietor for eighteen years.—"I knew Brigadier-general Picton as a just man, and of integrity; and I shall owe to him eternal gratitude for having preserved my life and fortune by his courage, activity, and abilities, in times when we were threatened with fire, and the malevolence of the negroes and other vagabonds, who only waited for a favourable moment to cut our throats."

The Honourable John Nihell, member of council, and judge of the court of Consulado.—"To the firmness of his government, and his apparent determination to suffer no persons of revolutionary principles to remain in the colony, I attribute the order and tranquillity in the island after its capture; and I ascribe the present flourishing state of this colony to the firmness and uniform good conduct of General Picton, in giving ample protection to all good and peaceable subjects, and driving out all of a contrary character."

Mich. St. Pè, alcalde of the second election. —"I knew Governor Picton since 1798; and he was a man of good morals and practice, frank, impartial, disinterested; zealous for his Majesty's service, and for the preservation of the colony. There are very few inhabitants, of those who were here before the capture of the colony, who do not believe they owe to his vigilance their whole families."

The Honourable Philip Langton, Esquire, alcalde of the first election.—"I had the honour of being intimately acquainted with General Picton; and all the respectable characters that I ever heard speak of him in the colony join

me in considering him as an active, intelligent, humane, and disinterested magistrate, warmly attached to the interests of his sovereign and of this colony."

Such testimonials,* from individuals of unimpeachable respectability, were enough to make men of that station in life from which a special jury is drawn, reject any prejudice which public clamour might have raised; the whole course of the present proceedings was marked by a milder and less excited feeling; and even

* The feelings of the inhabitants of Trinidad, and the impression which his conduct as governor had left upon their minds, cannot be more strikingly shown than by the two following instances: — the first, that within a short time previous, and subsequent to the departure of General Picton from Trinidad, the inhabitants of the island subscribed a sum of money for the purpose of presenting him with a handsome sword, as an evidence of the high estimation in which they held his character, both in his public and private capacities. This money was remitted to England, with an humble address from the subscribers to his royal highness the Duke of York, requesting him to present to their late governor this testimonial of their esteem and respect. In compliance with this address, his royal highness was graciously pleased to present the sword to General Picton, accompanying this act of condescension with some highly flattering remarks upon his judicious conduct whilst governor. The

the ingenuity and eloquence of Mr. Garrow seemed deficient. During the first trial he had exhausted all his expedients, and he now came into court with, as he well knew, no argument which was likely to benefit his cause: his only

The second instance was even more soothing to the feelings of General Picton, especially as it was the means of enabling him to indulge in that noble generosity which formed so prominent and admirable a portion of his character. Whilst the prosecution was proceeding with the most vindictive activity — when the Government and people of England seemed arrayed against him in a body — at that moment the inhabitants of Trinidad came forward with a spirit and feeling which made General Picton ever remember them with unfeigned gratitude. Confident that the expenses to which he must necessarily be exposed were enough to ruin one in his then moderate circumstances, they in the most liberal and considerate manner subscribed amongst themselves a sum amounting to nearly four thousand pounds, which was remitted to England, with a respectful but friendly address, praying him to accept it, that it might be employed in obtaining justice and refuting the many libellous charges which had been brought against him. It will readily be believed that this proof of the continued esteem of those whom he had governed for so long a period must have been most gratifying to him. General Picton *was* deeply impressed by this mark of consideration, and returned to the inhabitants his warmest and sincerest thanks.

A short time after the receipt of this money, a dreadful fire broke out in the principal town of Trinidad, destroying a great deal of property, and doing much injury to the

hope was, that in the course of the evidence he might be enabled to catch at some legal point and again succeed in obtaining a verdict. But his opponent was too wary: he was prepared with witnesses for every probable contingency; and in consequence, after a protracted hearing, the jury returned the following special verdict:—

"That by the law of Spain torture existed in the Island of Trinidad at the time of the cession to Great Britain, and that no malice existed in the mind of the defendant against Luise Calderon independent of the illegality of the act."

The reader will at once perceive that this decision completely destroyed the foundation upon which the former verdict had been obtained, viz. Mr. Garrow's assertion that the law of Spain did not exist in the island of Trinidad

poorer inhabitants, many of whom were left utterly destitute. The moment General Picton was made acquainted with this distressing calamity, he took the most expeditious means of remitting the whole amount back to the island for the relief of those who had suffered. This act requires no comment, and it might have been supposed that so eloquent an appeal would at least have mitigated the rancour of his enemies. But the cry of popular reproach had been raised against him; it was kept alive by private enmity; and it was not a single act of virtue that could wipe away the stain.

at the time of the cession to Great Britain. Consequently, it is only reasonable to presume that, had General Picton's counsel been prepared with the requisite evidence (which he afterwards obtained for the special jury) to disprove Mr. Garrow's statement, the jury would then have acquitted General Picton, and he would have been spared the accumulation of expense, anxiety, and opprobrium which he had to endure.

The words at the termination of the special verdict, "independent of the illegality of the act," refer to the question (which was left to the decision of the judges,) whether, as a British governor, he should have allowed such a punishment to be inflicted? But the vindication which he pleaded in answer to this was:—"I was desired to administer the laws of the island as they existed at the capitulation. Of these I knew nothing; but my knowledge of the language enabled me to learn them. A judge was appointed under me, with the same instructions, to administer Spanish law; and he was acquainted with the laws of Spain: to him therefore I was obliged to look; and, however contrary to my opinion of justice and huma-

nity, which was founded upon our own admirable institution, I was compelled to sanction his proceedings. Had I been told to administer English law, I should have done so to the best of my ability; but I was instructed to administer justice according to a code of which I was totally ignorant; and the disturbed state of the colony left me little time for study. In the case for which I am now being tried, if I was guilty of anything culpable, it was ignorance: but the notary cited the law to me,* and I then thought I had no alternative but to administer the Spanish laws as they were, instead of, as I have since learned, modelling them to the forms prescribed by our own legislature, and to the feelings of the British public. By the law of England, which it appears ought to have been put in force instead of those of Spain, I think the girl Luise Calderon as an accessory before the fact, and Gonzales as the principal, would have been hanged for stealing in a dwelling-house above the value of forty shillings, while Pedro Ruiz would have lost his money; and I leave impartial minds to determine whether in this instance Spanish

* Vide page 165.

law was not more satisfactory and merciful to all parties."

These remarks are contained in a letter from General Picton to a friend, and form an admirable summing up of the proceedings which it has been our duty to relate. In order that the reader's attention may not be called from the contemplation of General Picton's brilliant career, which has obtained for him a lasting fame, the concluding proceedings of this prosecution are here briefly detailed.

An argument on the special verdict was heard on the 10th of February 1810, when the Court ordered "the defendant's recognizance to be respited until they should further order;" which may be said to have terminated this singular prosecution. But as judgment was never given in this case, we subjoin the note with which the report of this case in "Howell's State Trials" concludes:—"It was thought by the bar, that had the opinion of the Court been delivered, judgment would have been given against General Picton; but that, upon a consideration of the merits, it would have been followed by a punishment so slight, and so little commensurate with the magnitude

of the questions embraced by the case, as to have reflected but little credit upon the prosecution: and I have been informed, that it was by the advice of one of the learned counsel, who greatly distinguished himself in arguing the questions which arose in this case, that it was not again agitated."

And thus, in the language of a contemporary periodical, "after a trial which seemed to have no end; after an expense of seven thousand pounds, which must have completed his ruin, had not his venerable uncle, General W. Picton, defrayed the whole costs of the suit, while *the expenses of his prosecutors were all paid by the Government;* his honour and justice were established on the firmest basis, and to the perfect satisfaction of every upright mind."

CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition to Walcheren. — Attack on and surrender of Flushing. — General Picton's letter relative to this event. — Appointed Governor of Flushing. — The Walcheren fever. — Return of General Picton to England. — Sir John Moore's retreat from Corunna, and its consequences. — Movements of the British Army under Lord Wellington.

General Picton had long sighed over the apparent destruction of all his professional prospects; and to those with whom he was intimate, he frequently expressed his impatience at being detained in England while his old companions in arms were engaged in active service upon the Continent. Still, it was impossible for him to leave his enemies at home while he was fighting against those of his country abroad: for no services which he might there perform would clear his reputation from the stigma which would await

him on his return. From the tedious processes of the law he was almost in despair of ever being released; and more than once during the proceedings he would have left his cause and character to the justice of the nation, and have sought a more active and congenial pursuit, had not his friends dissuaded him from this wild notion, and succeeded in convincing him of the importance of his presence to his defence.

For nearly six years he was, therefore, compelled to be an inactive but anxious observer of the proceedings of our troops. He perused with feverish excitement the various accounts from Spain, and watched the movements of Sir John Moore with all the military ardour which was so conspicuous in his character. The disastrous retreat upon Corunna, and the death of that unfortunate general, combined to raise the true spirit of General Picton's character above every other consideration, and early in 1809 he made application for some active employment.

The abilities of General Picton were highly appreciated by his royal highness the Duke of York. The estimation in which he was held,

and the flattering language in which he was spoken of, by Sir Ralph Abercromby, had obtained for him the duke's favour; and one distinguishing feature of his royal highness's official character whilst holding the situation of Commander-in-chief was, with very few exceptions, always to employ those officers whose abilities he considered would be most conducive to the success of his Majesty's arms.

It will be remembered, that about the end of July 1809 an expedition was fitted out by the British Government, of which at that time the Duke of Portland was premier. The preparations were commenced early in May. About the end of July a fleet assembled in the Downs, consisting of thirty-nine sail of the line and thirty-six frigates, together with a considerable number of gun-boats, bombs, and small craft; while the troops, amounting to about forty thousand men, assembled at the neighbouring sea-ports; making the whole force, including seamen and marines, nearly one hundred thousand men. The curiosity and expectation of the country were excited; the spectacle was grateful to the pride and flattering to the hopes of the nation; and

Dover, Deal, Ramsgate, and Margate were full of visitors, anxious to witness the sailing of this imposing armament.

Its destination was not long a mystery. To take possession of Flushing; and destroy the French fleet, arsenals, and dockyards up the Scheldt, was universally known to be the object of this *secret* expedition; and it is even stated that so little precaution was taken to prevent this fact from being made public, that the French were actually acquainted with it in April, and then ordered Flushing and the Scheldt to be put in the best state of defence. Still, so powerful was this armament, and so confident of success were its projectors, that they appointed to the command "a man whose very name," in the words of a writer upon this expedition, "was proverbial for inactivity." This was Lord Chatham, the brother of William Pitt. The reason for his being selected in preference to the many more able and distinguished officers was unfortunately too apparent: his fortune was embarrassed, and this lucrative command would improve it. But the country had to pay largely both in riches

and honour for this sacrifice of national interest to private emolument.

It was to this expedition that Major-general Picton was appointed, being on the staff of the commander-in-chief. He did not entertain any great opinion of the plan of this undertaking, and frequently expressed to Colonel Pleydel the doubts which he had of its success; and the result proved these to have been well founded. He joined the army towards the end of July; and on the 28th and 29th, the fleet, under the command of Sir Richard Strachan, got under weigh in two divisions.

On arriving at Walcheren and South Beveland, the enemy showed no disposition to make any resistance. At Flushing, however, it appeared that they intended to concentrate all their force, and, if possible, check the British advance. This place was accordingly invested, and by the 13th of August the batteries were completed; at which period the frigates and smaller vessels having taken their respective stations, the bombardment commenced with considerable effect. The town suffered dreadfully, both from the shells and Congreve rockets;

and, on the following day, the line-of-battle ships cannonaded the forts for several hours, until the enemy's fire was silenced. Early the next morning, General Monnet, who commanded in Flushing, demanded a suspension of hostilities for a few hours; after the expiration of which the town was surrendered to the British, when the garrison, consisting of about six thousand men, were made prisoners of war.

Although the expedition was thus far successful, still the mode of conducting the attack was the subject of much animadversion amongst the military men of the day. It was observed that a total want of skill and energy marked the whole of the proceedings. The batteries and trenches were formed one after another without method or arrangement; and much confusion existed in consequence of neither the officers nor soldiers attached to the engineer department knowing their proper situations, by which the works were carried on very slowly. The troops were placed within the range of the enemy's guns before any of the necessary stores for attack were landed; while no precautions were taken to confine the

enemy to his fortifications. The men in the trenches seldom had any covering party in their front; at the same time that the enemy's advanced picquets were frequently on their flanks. It was further observed that the island of Cadsand, the only place from whence the enemy could possibly receive supplies or reinforcements, was left unoccupied; and as the naval force had not interrupted the communication, advantage was taken of this omission to pass three thousand men over from Cadsand to Flushing.

It is not our province to enter into the propriety or justice of these remarks; but the known misconduct of this futile expedition certainly favours them. The following letter, written five days after the surrender of Flushing, to Colonel Pleydel, discovers General Picton's sentiments upon the occasion.

"Flushing, 20th August 1809.

"My dear Colonel,

"I have to acknowledge your very kind letter of the 15th, which was particularly agreeable, as it contained such satisfactory in-

formation of the general's health. The letter which you allude to as having appeared in *The Times* I never heard a word of before; nor have I received a line from either of those gentlemen since I left England.

"I perfectly agree with you in opinion, that the obstacles to our further advance towards Antwerp are nearly insurmountable; and I may with very little qualification say, wholly so. In my opinion, we shall not attempt anything further; although we make great demonstrations, as if we were determined to proceed immediately. According to the accounts we have here, a very respectable force has been collected at Antwerp; and all the country through which we must unavoidably pass has been completely flooded. Under such circumstances, I trust we are too wise to commit the safety of the fleet and army; and that we shall prudently content ourselves with *the laurels* which we have already gathered.

"Marshal Bernadotte has arrived on the opposite shores of Cadsand, and is now busily employed in erecting mortar batteries, for the annoyance of Flushing, and of our squadron which rides at anchor in its vicinity. The dis-

tance between the two islands is barely three miles, and it is apprehended that their large mortars will range that distance.

"I have the command in Flushing, and the neighbouring country, with four regiments. The town is a perfect heap of ruins, exhibiting a state of misery not easily conceivable. Every house has been materially damaged, and not one in twenty is in any degree habitable, or capable of affording protection against either the rain or climate. The best thing we can do will be to destroy the military defences, naval arsenal, and basin, and then withdraw our army and squadron as soon as possible.

"I have fallen in with an excellent manuscript plan of Flushing, which will give you a good idea of the place and our proceedings, when I have the pleasure of meeting you; and I rather think that period is at no great distance.

"With my best wishes for your health,

"Believe me, &c.

"THOMAS PICTON."

The opinion expressed by General Picton of the wisdom of the directors of this expedition did them no more than justice. A large force

was collected at Antwerp, composed of the national guards of the Belgic provinces and those from the nearest points of France; while the forts on the Scheldt were well manned, and every preparation made to oppose the advance of our fleet and army. The immense quantity of stores at Antwerp were partly removed, and the remainder kept ready for immediate transportation; and preparations had been made for carrying the French ships higher up the river, in case the British troops had succeeded in their attempt to force the passage. All idea of pushing up the Scheldt was therefore abandoned, and, on the 14th of September, Lord Chatham, with the greater portion of the troops, returned to England; leaving, however, a considerable body to keep possession of the island of Walcheren, while a part of the fleet blockaded the river so as to enable our merchants to introduce their goods into Holland.

The havoc which this pestilential spot caused amongst our troops is too well known. By the official returns it would appear that, trifling as were our losses from fire and sword, this was the most fatal contest in which our

army was ever engaged; nearly one half of the troops were carried off by the fever, while the majority of the others bore with them to the grave the effects of this dreadful disease. Amongst these was General Picton, who shortly after the occupation of Flushing, in the performance of his arduous duties as governor, and while rendering every assistance which humanity could dictate to the sick and wounded, was at length himself attacked.

A strong constitution and medical skill enabled him to survive the shock; but its rapid progress and deadly violence in a few hours reduced him to the brink of the grave. So soon as the immediate danger was past, he was ordered to return to England; and in a ship like a lazar-house he was brought home.

But a brief allusion to the termination of this expedition may not be uninteresting to the reader. In the month of September, at which period the fever made the most dreadful ravages, the average number of deaths in the army was from two hundred and fifty to three hundred a week. Still the British Government could not determine upon either giving it up or retaining it.

Applications were being constantly made for leave to employ the peasants in the island in thickening the parapets and strengthening the dilapidated ramparts of Flushing, but without effect, until near the end of October, when large quantities of brick and lime, together with some artificers, were sent from England. But after their arrival the plans of the Government were changed, and in the middle of November they commenced demolishing the works and basin; and as soon as this was accomplished, the island of Walcheren was evacuated by the remains of the British troops: being, in fact, the only termination which could have been anticipated. The enemy was justly elated, while the British nation saw with indignation the imbecility of those who planned and conducted this expensive and fatal expedition.

Upon his arrival in England, General Picton was advised to visit Cheltenham, the waters of which place were recommended as the only means of recovering from that prostration of strength which the Walcheren fever had left. From thence he removed to Bath. But he was not long allowed to remain inactive; the affairs of Europe presented an appearance anything but

gratifying, and England found herself compelled to employ not only her wealth and arms to stop the progress of Napoleon, but even to have recourse to defensive preparations, which presented quite a novel feature in her history. The unfortunate evacuation of Spain, consequent on the retreat of Sir John Moore, and the inability of the small force in Portugal to offer an effectual resistance to the advance of Soult, and afterwards of Massena, gave confidence to the enemies of England; while her allies, who were watching anxiously for some proof of her military prowess, began to doubt her power to co-operate with them.

The people of Spain were making brave but hopeless struggles against the king who had been placed upon their throne by Napoleon, and who was sustained in that position solely by the presence of a French army. Austria had been beaten down in the unequal conflict; and it appeared that unless England could animate some of the vanquished states to a fresh struggle, the whole of continental Europe must fall beneath the power of Napoleon, who would then have but one, and that his dearest hope, to realize,—the conquest of Great Britain.

The master-mind of Wellington was, however, embracing the whole position and resources of the situation in which he was placed. To rescue Spain at this moment was impossible: too much dissension existed in that country to hope for that unanimous co-operation which alone could render her struggles successful; and it cannot be doubted that Lord Wellesley had now to feel the effects of Sir John Moore's want of decision and his delay in co-operating with the naturally indolent Spaniards, when the first effervescence of patriotism stimulated them to exertions foreign to their character. Sir John Moore seems to have doubted when he might have had confidence: but if he had stirred up and kept alive the spirit of the moment, he would probably have rescued Spain, instead of leaving her to be overrun by an army far inferior, at least in numbers, to that which the English general might have headed. It is true the Spanish army was at this moment ill organized and worse armed; but they were numerous and brave, and possessed a hatred for their invaders, which would have excited them to an obstinate defence. Fighting by the side of British troops, whose cool resolution and steady

discipline would have been a check upon their intemperate impetuosity, their efforts would have been directed by experienced judgment to the most vulnerable and therefore most advantageous points of attack.

Sir John Moore could not have suffered more either in privations, losses, or fame, by risking a battle in the interior of Spain, than he did in his retreat to Corunna; and the same heroism and skill which there enabled this miserable and disorganized remnant of the British army, not only to check, but even to obtain a victory over their pursuers, might have spared them the necessity of a retreat. But it was too late, — they fought for safety, and not victory.

It has been asserted in vindication of Sir John Moore, that, from the inspections which he had been enabled to make of the Spanish forces, he was convinced that to depend upon them to the same extent as upon regular troops, or even to operate at all with them, would be exposing his army to almost certain defeat. He accordingly waited until the Spaniards were sufficiently organized to be effective; but, by some extraordinary mismanagement or inacti-

vity amongst those whose duty it was to drill the recruits, many months were occupied in accomplishing badly what any sergeant in our service would be ashamed of not doing well in the same number of weeks; and, in consequence, every officer sent by the British general to watch the state of the Spanish levies returned with the same report, that they were in a miserable state as to discipline, although the public and official documents of the supreme Junta assured him that it was quite the reverse. But as the information received by the Junta itself was no less imperfect than that which was forwarded to Sir John Moore, it ceases to be a matter of surprise that it should condemn the English general, and accuse the British nation of having deserted the Spanish cause, when every assistance had been rendered in co-operating with it.

According to these reports, Sir John Moore had at one period of the campaign no less than one hundred and twenty thousand men ready to act under his command. These were, however, spread over a great extent, and possessed in some instances a very imperfect line of communication. Still, no effort was

made to concentrate this force, and thus to form any effectual opposition to the advance of Napoleon and Soult. The consequences are well known; the Spanish armies were beaten in detail: first, that of General Blake, at Espinosa; then that of the Conde de Belvidere, who commanded the army of Estremadura. Castaños, at the head of the armies of Andalusia and Arragon, now alone remained of the three "large Spanish armies" which had tempted the British Government to send a force to Spain. Castaños would have retreated upon the defeat of the other two generals; but he was deceived into an action, and met the French near Tudela. The result was certain; his young soldiers fought bravely, but were beaten.

Napoleon having thus removed those impediments to his grand operations, which would otherwise have divided his force, next moved towards Madrid, with the intention of driving the English out of Spain. The success of his plans, the disastrous retreat of our army, the compulsory though gallant defence of its embarkation at Corunna, together with the death of Sir John Moore, are all too well

known to need recapitulation. We have been tempted to digress from our subject thus far in order to show the position of affairs at the time when General Picton joined Lord Wellington, and we cannot better conclude this part of our narrative than in the words of a gallant officer who served under the command of Sir John Moore in this memorable campaign.

"Perhaps the British army has produced some abler men than Sir John Moore; it has certainly produced many who, in point of military talent, were and are quite his equals; but it cannot, and perhaps never could, boast of one more beloved, not by his own personal friends alone, but by every individual that served under him. It would be affectation to deny that Sir John Moore, during his disastrous retreat, issued many orders in the highest degree painful to the feelings of honourable men, who felt that their conduct had not merited them. His warmest admirers have acknowledged this, and his best friends have lamented it. But, in all probability, no one would have lamented it more heartily than himself, had he lived to review in a moment of calmness the general conduct of this cam-

paign; because there never lived a man possessed of a better heart, nor, in ordinary cases, of a clearer judgment." *

Returning to the period when Lord Wellington was compelled, in order to avoid being placed in the same situation as his predecessor, to move his army into Portugal, and there to assume a defensive position, it will be perceived that all the attempts made by the English general to obtain the co-operation of the Spaniards in an efficient manner proved unavailing.

The recollection of Sir John Moore's indecision, and his retreat when (according to the opinion and belief of the Junta) everything had been done by Spain which Spain could do, doubtless rendered them cautious of confiding in British aid, and even uncertain of our abilities. By such a man as Lord Wellington, want of decision in military operations must have been considered a crime; and unwilling to be made responsible for the vacillating conduct of the Spanish leaders and government, he resolved by one determined step to make himself independent of their move-

* Marquis of Londonderry's Narrative.

ments, and, after having gathered strength, to rescue them and their country from the despotism of France, even without relying upon any assistance from themselves.

Another strong inducement on the part of Lord Wellington for quitting Spain, was the total neglect of his army by those whose duty it was to supply it with provisions and forage. In a letter to the Marquis of Wellesley, dated the 18th of August, upon this subject, he says: "Since the 22nd of last month, the horses have not received their regular deliveries of barley, and the infantry not ten days' bread."

* * * * * *

"Fifty thousand men are collected upon a spot which cannot afford subsistence for ten thousand, and there are no means of sending to a distance to make good the deficiency: the Junta have issued orders, which, for want of arrangement, there are no persons to obey; and the army would perish here, if I were to remain, before the supplies could arrive."

CHAPTER XIV.

Retreat of the British army upon Torres Vedras.—General Picton receives orders to join the army in Spain.—His anxiety to reach the field of operation.—Appointed to the command of the Third Division.—Skirmishes and manœuvres of General Crawfurd.

When the British general announced his intention of falling back upon Portugal, the Spanish government pretended great astonishment. The sincerity of their surprise might however be doubted, from the simple fact that they had long since been prepared for such a measure, not only by circumstances but even by public announcements. Still they were determined to be surprised; and when the reality of Lord Wellington's designs could no longer be misunderstood, they offered to supply him with everything which he demanded; but as their promises were as

little to be relied upon as their performances, he turned a deaf ear to their fears as well as their remonstrances, and accordingly, on the 4th of August 1809, he crossed the Tagus by the bridge of Arzobispo, and established his head-quarters at Deleytoza.

The force of the enemy at this time in Spain was supposed to be little short of one hundred and thirty thousand men; of these, thirty-five thousand were employed in Arragon and Catalonia, and the remainder in the two Castiles and Estremadura; while, to oppose them, Lord Wellington had only twenty-three thousand British troops capable of bearing arms, together with about seventy thousand Spanish troops dispersed in different parts of the country, badly armed and worse disciplined. Still their numbers, and the dearth of information under which the French generals laboured, owing to the ill-will of the inhabitants, gave to these armies a formidable appearance, which prevented Soult from concentrating his force against the British, and overwhelming them before they could reach the lines of Torres Vedras; and even when Lord Wellington was established in that extraordinary position, the

apprehension of being attacked in the rear by the whole Spanish nation, compelled Soult to leave a large army to watch their movements.

It might have been supposed that the many victories that the French had obtained over the Spaniards would have made them despise their attacks. Soult had, in fact, learned to look with contempt upon them as regular soldiers, and in consequence directed his personal efforts against the British forces. But Joseph Bonaparte, placed upon the throne of Spain by Napoleon, without any of the abilities necessary to support the crown of an usurper, felt that his only security was in his brother's arms; whenever Soult, therefore, wanted any reinforcements to carry on his operations, Joseph always had some remarkably good reason for refusing them. Had it not been for this conflict of interests and plans amongst the French commanders, Soult would doubtless have run any hazard to bring Lord Wellington to a battle before he was enabled to fall back upon Lisbon; nay, had he known the exact numbers of the British, it is more than probable that he would have made the attempt with the army which

he commanded: but, fortunately for the fate of Europe, the numbers of the British were greatly exaggerated, while those of the enemy were proportionably underrated. Lord Wellington did not therefore hurry his retreat, because he did not know the strength of his opponent; while Soult did not push on his advance to cut him off from Lisbon for the same reason.

On the morning of the 11th the army resumed its march, and arrived at Jaraicejo on the same day; from thence, on the 20th, it continued its route by Truxillo, Maejador, Medelin, and Merida. While the head-quarters of the army were at this latter place, a despatch came from Lord Wellesley, who had long been at Madrid trying to model the Junta into something like a consistent body. In this letter he informed Lord Wellington of the terror of the Junta, and the general alarm and confusion of the people, at being left to the defence of their own troops; for such was in point of fact the only interpretation which could be put upon their fears. Lord Wellesley, wishing to give them confidence, then proposed to Lord Wellington that he should endeavour to cover Andalusia by

taking up a position behind the Guadiana, so that his left should rest upon the frontier of Portugal; adding, however, this remark, "I am fully sensible not only of the *indelicacy*, but of the inutility, of attempting to offer you any opinion of mine in a situation where your own judgment must be the best guide."

Upon receiving this despatch, Lord Wellington halted at Merida for a few days, but he was ultimately obliged to refuse all further co-operation with the Spanish Junta. Being, however, unwilling entirely to abandon the seat of war, and at the same time being desirous of giving his troops a little rest and confidence from the dispiriting effects of constant retreat, he put the army in cantonments on the banks of the Guadiana, occupying Badajoz, Elvas, Campo-mayor, &c. This position ensured to him either an uninterrupted retreat upon Lisbon, or advance into Spain, as circumstances might render advisable; while, at the same time, abundance of forage and provisions could be obtained from the surrounding country.

The sickness in the army at this period was of a most alarming nature; it had prevailed

amongst the troops to a considerable extent; but with inactivity it appeared to gain additional violence, and during the stay of the allies in these cantonments there were frequently from eight to nine thousand men in the hospitals at one time. Still, however, they remained at this place until December.

It was now that the Spaniards were made to suffer the consequences of their vacillating and treacherous conduct. Their armies were beaten in nearly all directions. The fatal battle of Ocana, with the unprofitable success and afterwards disastrous defeat on the heights of Tormes, destroyed the remnants not only of the Spanish armies, but also of their confidence; while the French were left unmolested to advance into the south of Spain, and threaten Portugal by entering the province of Beira. To effect the first object, Joseph Bonaparte at once put himself at the head of a large army, having under him Soult as his major-general, with Victor, Mortier, and Sebastiani each in command of his own corps. Napoleon had just conquered Germany; the fatal battle of Wagram having, according to

many, decided the fate of Europe; and the Peninsula, it was supposed, must ere long submit to the united forces of the French generals.

It is said that Napoleon expressed dissatisfaction at the inactivity and imperfect success of Joseph: to beat the Spaniards was, in the opinion of the conqueror at Wagram, hardly deserving of praise; the expulsion of the British forces was his ambition and his hope. While an English soldier was in the field against him, he felt that he had to contend with an enemy that he respected; and he now resolved to turn the whole of his strength against Wellington and his little band. Spain was almost entirely subdued; Albuquerque, the only Spanish general who deserved the gratitude of his country, in opposition to the supreme Junta, and entirely on his own responsibility, flew to defend Cadiz, the only place of strength that still held out in the cause of patriotism.

Joseph, who had again established his authority in the capital, pushed on Soult to invest Cadiz before the arrival of the Spa-

nish general; but Albuquerque, despising the warning instructions of the Junta, by great exertions contrived to reach that city just two days before the French army: by which decided measure the fortress was put in such a state of defence, that a large French army was occupied in its investment for nearly two years, thus weakening the force employed against the allies in Portugal. Lord Wellington now became apprehensive for the fate of Lisbon. The French had received large levies, and were evidently preparing to attack Portugal by the most vulnerable points, Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; and they were only waiting until the winter was over to commence their march. The English general had not, however, sufficient men to study convenience or seasons, and he was compelled to make up by diligence and activity for the inadequacy of the force with which he had to contend against a numerous and victorious enemy.

It should here be observed, that during the cantonment of the troops on the banks of the Guadiana, Lord Wellington was forwarding the construction of those stupendous lines of defence which he now looked forward

to as the only present means of keeping a British force in Portugal. At the same time that he was forming the lines of Torres Vedras, he was organising the troops to defend them; and Portugal was preparing an army under his directions; which he hoped would be worthy of fighting by the side of English soldiers. He had apparently resolved in his own mind, that upon the defence of Lisbon depended the fate of Europe, and the result certainly confirmed both his judgment and abilities.

The cantonment around Badajoz was broken up on the 15th of December, when, with as little delay as possible, the army was marched in twenty-one days into the valley of the Mondego, in the very centre of the province of Beira. The advance, under General Crawfurd, took up a position in front of Almeida, his patrols extending as far as Ciudad Rodrigo; General Hill being in the mean time posted with about ten thousand men at Abrantes, to protect Lisbon on the south, the right flank of the army, and watch Badajoz; the head-quarters being at Viseu, while that of the

Portuguese was at Thomar, in which place and its neighbouring villages the troops were quartered.

The improvement in the health of the allied army was the first beneficial result apparent from this change of position: in addition to which, both provisions and forage were much more abundant. The British army was so posted as to form a line of defence from the Tagus to the Douro, with General Hill, as before mentioned, on the extreme right; his right being again protected by Elvas and Badajoz, which latter was then held by Romana, both places having a respectable garrison. Still, it could not be supposed that either of these fortresses could arrest the march of Mortier and Regnier, (who were then at Merida with about twenty thousand men,) provided those generals should advance by this route upon Lisbon. General Hill's position consequently gave to our army perfect security in its retreat upon the lines of Torres Vedras, as the force under his command could at all events defend the passage of the Tagus until Lord Wellington's army was enabled to fall back to his assistance.

Much manœuvring took place between

these generals: whenever Mortier advanced towards Badajoz, Hill pushed his army on in the same direction to its relief, which was no sooner perceived than the French general again fell back to his former position; but it afterwards became evident that this was done only for the purpose of diverting the attention of the British commander-in-chief from the vast preparations which were being made in the interior, and the immense levies of troops which were marching in from France, and proceeding to the frontier of Portugal, in order to overwhelm the British force at one blow upon the commencement of the ensuing campaign.

Our subject does not impose upon us a detailed account of the events of this war; but a general outline of the proceedings of the allied armies is necessary, inasmuch as those proceedings are connected with the military career of General Picton.

The letters of the general describe more particularly the different engagements in which he was concerned; and it is therefore necessary to follow the progress of the army, and more especially that of the third division, in

order to give connexion to the narrative. With this design, we have recapitulated the proceedings of the allies up to the period when General Picton first held a command, in order that their situation may be clearly understood.

It was the good fortune of Sir Thomas Picton to join the British army at the precise moment when the reverses and disappointments to which it had hitherto been exposed had ceased. But, perhaps, the real state of the resources of Great Britain, and the position of our affairs, cannot be better expressed in few words than by the following brief extract from the "Annals of the Peninsular Campaign."

"Never at any period had the cloud which lowered on the cause of Spanish liberty shed a darker or more impenetrable gloom. Those whose confidence in the zeal, the devotion, the native and untamed energy of the Spanish people, had led them to predict a successful termination to the contest, now wavered in their hope. The British government, urged by the enthusiasm of the people, had at first rushed blindfold into the contest: the vast resources of England had been inefficiently wast-

ed, her utmost efforts had been found unequal to arrest the progress of the French arms, and the lamentable expedition to the Scheldt had exposed the counsels of her rulers to the ridicule of Europe."

This was unfortunately not an exaggerated picture, and there was not a much more flattering prospect in the perspective. A defensive war is never gratifying to the pride of a nation; and the desertion of Spain, and subsequent retreat towards Lisbon, were considered by the majority of the people of England as only a preliminary to the total evacuation of Portugal, either at the point of the enemy's bayonets, or by a more speedy but even yet more disgraceful retreat before their approach. Lord Wellington did not assure the government of success in his attempt to defend Lisbon; but he remarked, that if he were supported by them, he had every reason to expect it. He wanted arms, soldiers, money, and officers. The government could not promise him much; dissatisfaction was naturally excited at their wavering and imbecile policy in entering into one enterprise without reflection, and then, instead of pursuing it with

vigour, plunging into another where no hope of success could exist. They now, however, resolved to direct the whole of the country's resources to assist Lord Wellington in keeping a footing on the Peninsula: but these were now so few, that the British general had much difficulty in obtaining sufficient means to support his army; while reinforcements of men arrived so slowly, that Lord Wellington soon discovered that he could place little dependence upon any promised succours from England. Some valuable officers were, however, added to his staff, and amongst them, early in 1810, may be enumerated General Picton.

It has already been observed that he had been suffering for some time from the remains of the Walcheren fever, and was remaining at Bath in order to recruit his impaired constitution. While at this place, he received orders to join the army in Portugal immediately: orders which, although far from being restored to perfect health, he obeyed with the greatest alacrity, and made preparations to embark by the first opportunity.

The service in which he was now about to

engage was, according to his own words, "one in which a man could not fail to gain honour, if he only did his duty; while, if he wished to distinguish himself, there was plenty of room." And he used frequently to remark, previous to his joining the army, "that to fight against the arms of Napoleon was more worthy a British soldier, than to war against the troops of any other nation in the world."

General Picton's anxiety to reach the field of operation made him facilitate his arrangements at home, with a noble anxiety, as he wrote to an old and esteemed friend, "to convince the people of England, that if ever he was guilty of an act injurious to the interests or honour of his country, it was the fault of his judgment, and not in accordance with the dearest wishes of his heart. I will," he adds, "show them that my only desire for fame is, that by deserving it I may benefit my country; that if I obtain honour, it may be to her glory; and if my life is shed in her service, that she will do my memory justice." The remains of the deadly complaint which he had imbibed at Walcheren still lurked about his system; but his was not a spirit to be

restrained by bodily infirmity. Regardless of every selfish consideration, he embarked with feelings certainly soured by the persecution and injustice to which he had been exposed, but still ardent in the cause for which he was about to fight, and ambitious to distinguish himself in the coming struggle.

The head-quarters of the army of Wellington were at Viseu when General Picton arrived in Portugal, and he was immediately appointed to the command of the third division of the army. This division was composed of the following regiments:—

Brigades. Colonel Mackinnon, 45th Reg. 1st bat.
74th Reg.; 88th, 1st bat.
Major-Gen. Lightburne, 5th Reg.; 2nd bat. 58th;
ditto 83rd; ditto 1st comp. 5th bat. of 60th Reg.

These forces, thus placed under the command of General Picton, were quartered in the neighbourhood of Celerico. The first division, under General Spencer, was at Viseu; the second, under General Hill, at Abrantes; the fourth, under General Cole, at Guarda; and the light division, under General Crawfurd, at Pinhel; while the cavalry, commanded by

General Cotton, was stationed along the banks of the river Mondego: the total amount of British troops at this moment in the field being twenty-three thousand four hundred men.

The English general was now waiting for the advance of the French; his design being to retard their progress, so that they should exhaust their resources before he drew them into the snare which he had been so long and skilfully preparing. He therefore caused the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida to be put in as efficient a state of defence as they would admit of, and reinforced the garrisons. The lines of Torres Vedras were already in an advanced state of preparation to receive the army, and all was anxiety for the opening of the campaign. But little was, however, expected from this small army. In England, the affairs of Portugal were the subject of continual ridicule; the very idea of barely twenty-four thousand men resisting the whole French army, was looked upon as so absurd, that those who had hazarded their reputation upon the result were afterwards at a loss how to

account for their want of foresight; while in France there was but one opinion, and this amounted to a certainty, that "the miserable few composing the remnant of the British army would be driven into the sea, and Massena would have possession of Portugal within *seventeen* days after his army was put in motion." Lord Wellington was not ignorant that these opinions were expressed at home and abroad, and that himself and his army were objects of ridicule to the people of both countries; but he had confidence in himself and in his soldiers; he estimated at their due value the fears of his countrymen and the hopes of his enemies; looked back upon his lines, and with unwavering resolution determined to disregard both.

But, during this period of apparent inactivity, the troops were amused and their confidence kept up by the skirmishes and manœuvres of the light division, under General Crawfurd. With this division, which had served under Sir John Moore, and which was in the most perfect state of discipline, General Crawfurd commenced a series of daring, although not very profitable, manœuvres, which

were for a time the wonder and admiration of the whole army. Crawfurd's original proposition to Lord Wellington was, that he should advance to the river Agueda, while General Cole should move his division from Guarda to protect the line of the Coa.

Colonel Napier, in his able "History of the Peninsular War," says, "But that general (Cole) would not quit his own position at Guarda, and Lord Wellington approving, and yet desirous to secure the line of the Coa, with a view to succour Ciudad Rodrigo, brought up the third division to Pinhel." The singular wording of this sentence admits of rather an extraordinary interpretation, and would even imply that General Crawfurd planned and executed these manœuvres without orders from, or the authority of, Lord Wellington: for Crawfurd's proposition was of course made to him; and General Cole telling the commander of the forces that he "*would not quit his position*," would be rather an unprecedented measure, and certainly not one at all suited to the determined and uncompromising character of Wellington. If, on the contrary, Crawfurd made the proposition to General Cole, and that officer then said

he would not move, Crawfurd must have acted, if not without the concurrence, at least without the support, of Lord Wellington. Instead of General Cole having refused to move his division to the Coa, it is much more probable that Lord Wellington, considering Crawfurd's proposition as likely to involve the security of his line, made the alteration which Colonel Napier relates. For it cannot be denied, that if the fourth division had been removed from Guarda to Pinhel, the rear and right of the British position would have been exposed; whereas, by the advance of Picton's division, the centre was only thrown more forward: and doubtless it was this consideration, and not the opposition of General Cole, which gave rise to the rejection of this part of General Crawfurd's proposition.

General Picton was accordingly ordered to move his division to Pinhel, with instructions to support Crawfurd in case it should be necessary; but, at the same time, strictly to avoid an action with the enemy, unless compelled by imperative circumstances. The French army under Massena (now Prince of Essling, and whom Napoleon used to call "the favourite child of Victory,") was now placed in extended

divisions between San Felizes, Ledesma, and Salamanca, making active preparations for opening the campaign by the attack of Ciudad Rodrigo. The principal object of General Crawfurd's operations was to give confidence to that garrison, protect some villages between the Azava and Coa from the depredations of the French, and enable the British army to draw such resources from the protected country as would otherwise have been drained by the enemy.

The position of Crawfurd and his division was, however, one of extreme danger, and required all that activity for which he was so much distinguished. His troops were at the same time in so perfect a state of command, that the whole division would upon any occasion, whether of surprise or otherwise, be in order of battle, with the baggage packed and in the rear, in less than a quarter of an hour. The war which he carried on was of a marauding and desultory nature. The French were too deeply engaged in preparing to drive the British army into the sea, to pay much attention to the bold movements of so small a force; and only an occasional skirmish between the

hostile foraging parties enabled Crawfurd's troops to convince themselves that the French cavalry were not invincible; for in these little affairs the British cavalry were generally victorious.

It is, however, quite evident that Lord Wellington could never, in accordance with the plans which he had marked out for the defence of Portugal, have intended for one moment that Crawfurd should risk a general engagement; and knowing the fiery and determined spirit of that officer, it is a matter of surprise that he should have entrusted him with so momentous a command. Picton, cool and immovable, of a character totally opposed to that of Crawfurd, was, it is true, ordered to support him in case of his involving himself in what it would appear the commander of the forces thought probable: but Picton knew the delicacy of that duty;—he knew that if, through the rashness of Crawfurd, he was under the necessity of bringing his division to rescue him from the enemy, and if he were in his turn obliged to be supported by General Cole with the fourth division, that consequences might ensue which all the skill

and foresight of Lord Wellington would not be able to repair or guard against. How he acted when called upon by General Crawfurd for his assistance, together with the remarks made upon his conduct by Colonel Napier, will shortly appear.

CHAPTER XV.

Investment of Ciudad Rodrigo.— Picton's opinion of the situation of the Army.—Operations of General Crawfurd. — Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, and advance of the French army. — Death of Colonel Talbot. — Affair of the Coa.— Colonel Napier's account, and remarks thereon.— Charge against General Picton refuted.

Towards the end of April, upon the French general making a movement towards Ciudad Rodrigo by advancing the sixth corps, Lord Wellington changed his head-quarters to Celerico; the corps of Sir Rowland Hill still remaining in the vicinity of Abrantes, to protect Lisbon and the rear of the British position from the attack of Regnier by the way of Alentejo.

On the 26th of April, the French invested Ciudad Rodrigo, having about twenty-five thousand men beneath the walls. The

position of Lord Wellington and the English army was at this moment one of great interest. The Spanish garrison naturally looked for relief from their allies,—nay, it had almost been promised; but, with the exception of the British general moving his head-quarters a little nearer to the frontier, no demonstration was made even to co-operate with the besieged. The army was anxious to be led to the attack; but those officers who knew the magnitude of Lord Wellington's plans, saw the necessity for restraining its ardour; and the remark of General Picton upon this trying and peculiar situation is still remembered by a friend who cherishes his memory. "If," he observed, "we attempt to relieve the place, the French will drive us out of Portugal; while, if they get possession of it, they will lose time, which is more important to them than Ciudad Rodrigo; but they have got to find this out." The event proved that this check to the advance of the French, by wasting their resources, and giving the British nation time to recover from the effects of the unfortunate expedition to the Scheldt, saved the Peninsula.

The opinion of General Picton may here

again be given from the same authority, to the effect that, "had the French, instead of wasting their time in the attack on Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, pushed boldly on, Massena in front and Regnier in flank, by the way of Alentejo, the result would have been much more doubtful. Hill's division, he observed, many of which were Portuguese, could not have resisted the French army of Estremadura; while, although it would have cost Massena a considerable number of men to force the different positions which the allied army could take up to check the enemy, still, as the French were at this period nearly three to one, the majority of them old soldiers, and all well disciplined, he must have ultimately succeeded against the allied army, one half of which was composed of Portuguese, upon whom entire dependance could not be placed. In addition to this," he observed, "that if the French had moved upon Alentejo with anything like determination or force, Lord Wellington must have at once retreated into the lines, or at least to the support of Hill; when little could be done to stop the advance of Massena until

the British army was behind the lines of Torres Vedras."

General Picton, nevertheless, had a favourable opinion of the position selected by Lord Wellington, and always spoke of his operations in Portugal with the most unqualified approbation. The Marquis of Londonderry, in his "Narrative," referring to the same period to which these remarks apply, observes, "There were indeed many persons in the army who saw something of risk in our advanced situation;" and it is therefore to be presumed that others had their apprehensions of the success of Lord Wellington's plans. Picton, however, penetrated the designs of his illustrious commander, and did homage to his consummate skill.

But it is necessary to return to the proceedings of General Crawfurd, whose rashness might have involved the whole army of Wellington, by compelling him either to come to a general engagement with the enemy, or to make a hurried retreat within the first line of defence. The result of the former would have been too doubtful for Lord Wellington to risk,

with his disparity of force; while the latter would have caused the immediate surrender of Ciudad Rodrigo, and afterwards that of Almeida.

The details of the latter part of these operations are here more particularly entered into, as the conduct and character of General Picton are called in question by a modern writer, upon perhaps as serious an accusation as could be brought against a British officer—that of neglecting his professional duty for the indulgence of personal animosity.

General Crawfurd maintained his position upon the Agueda river and the stream of Azava, even after the French had commenced their operations against Ciudad Rodrigo; but in the beginning of June, about four thousand of their cavalry crossed the Agueda, when Crawfurd fell back to the neighbourhood of Gallegos, being still sufficiently near the besieged fortress to continue their confidence and hope of assistance in case of a favourable opportunity; while, further to produce this impression upon the defenders of Ciudad Rodrigo, Lord Wellington about this period moved his head-quarters to a village about half-way

between Celerico and Almeida, sending Crawfurd at the same time the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Light Dragoons to assist him in maintaining his present position. The Spaniards naturally concluded that these advance movements were preparatory to an attempt to relieve the besieged fortress; but such does not appear to have been the intention of Lord Wellington. Had Massena been improvident enough (which the English general could hardly have expected) to detach many troops from the army before Rodrigo, Lord Wellington, by his situation, was enabled quickly to concentrate his force upon the besiegers, and probably compel them to raise the siege. Crawfurd, with his two additional regiments of cavalry and some Spaniards, became more daring in his movements, and ventured upon several skirmishes with the enemy. Their force was, however, too overwhelming to allow him more than a momentary advantage: nevertheless, he determined to contest the ground.

Massena, having now fully invested and nearly reduced Ciudad Rodrigo, commenced his advance upon the allied position. After having in vain tried to provoke Lord Wel-

lington to an attempt to relieve the fortress, columns of infantry were collected in the neighbourhood of Marialva, which, with five regiments of cavalry and some artillery, early on the morning of the 4th of July, crossed the Azava, by the ford in front of Crawfurd's position; when the cavalry, coming on with great rapidity, drove in the British videttes, and then continued their advance, in spite of some horse-artillery which opened upon them with a galling fire. The allied infantry were compelled to retire in the direction of Almeida, some German and British horse covering their rear; when, passing the bridge over a small brook near Almeida, the French met with a temporary check by the spirited charge of the German hussars, who, led by a gallant officer named Captain Kraüchenberg, dashed boldly at the advancing squadron while they were attempting at a furious pace to follow the British troops. The charge of this small body was successful, and the enemy were for a moment driven back. The column of French infantry soon, however, crossed the stream at various fords; but when in front of Almeida, instead of pushing on, they were easily

repulsed by a few volleys from the Portuguese Caçadores, and gave up the pursuit. Crawfurd was, notwithstanding, under the necessity of falling back and taking up a new position near Fort Conception.

On the morning of the 11th, an affair took place which caused a considerable sensation in the army. General Crawfurd had discovered that the enemy's patrols were in the constant habit of pillaging the villages and hamlets in his front, and he determined if possible to cut them off in their retreat. Accordingly he arranged his movements by setting out at midnight, so as to get between them and their main body, with about six hundred cavalry; but by some accident Crawfurd, in an attempt to discover a shorter path, lost his way, and while his squadron was in an extended line, and not at all prepared for an attack, they came upon a French patrol, consisting of about two hundred infantry, with thirty troopers, posted in a kind of steep defile, up which the British had to pass in order to get at them. A charge was instantly made by the hussars in front; but as the infantry were quickly formed into square, they only suc-

ceeded in driving off the small body of the enemy's cavalry. They, however, rode boldly on to attack the square; but were received with so steady and well-directed a fire, that they were compelled to wheel and make way for the next squadron. But these were equally unsuccessful; the square was uninjured. A third attempt was, however, made; the brave Colonel Talbot, with four squadrons of the Fourteenth Dragoons, led the charge: they dashed rapidly forward, nor drew rein until the enemy's bayonets were at their horses' breasts; when the French, having reserved their fire, poured in a volley which brought down fourteen troopers and their brave leader. The remainder drew off; and General Crawfurd, despairing of success against infantry, and being deceived by some bodies of his own cavalry into a belief that the enemy were advancing upon him in force, ordered a retreat. The loss sustained in this contest was thirty men killed or wounded, besides Colonel Talbot, who was amongst the slain; while the effect produced upon the army, and more especially the cavalry, by this unsuccessful rencontre, was at this moment particularly depressing.

This affair took place the day after the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, which, after a brave and protracted resistance, being unable any longer to contend unsupported against the overwhelming force by which it was surrounded, was compelled to surrender. Massena accordingly, after having expended many men and much time, which was to him the more valuable, was, at the expiration of ten weeks, enabled to take possession of this stronghold. By this success a large portion of his army was released, and he was at liberty to make a further advance against the English position. Accordingly, on the 21st, the French cavalry were pushed forward in the direction of Almeida; when Crawfurd, having blown up Fort Conception, fell back under the protection of that fortress; and it was generally believed that he intended by this retrograde movement to pass the river Coa, and again resume his position in the British line.

But it should here be observed, that Lord Wellington had given him positive directions "not to fight beyond the Coa:" his orders being, according to the Marquis of Londonderry's Narrative, "that he should by every

possible means avoid an action; and that, as soon as he became aware of the approach of an enemy, he should retire, with ample space between, to the opposite bank of the river:" and that these orders might be clearly understood, they were repeated. Nevertheless, instead of making sure of his retreat, he made every preparation to repulse the enemy; but the degree of obedience which he paid to these orders from Lord Wellington cannot be better expressed than by the following copy of his report, dated

"Carvalhal, July 25th.

"My Lord,

"I have the honour to report to your lordship, that yesterday morning the enemy advanced to attack the light division, with between three and four thousand cavalry, a considerable number of guns, and a large body of infantry. On the first appearance of the heads of the columns, the cavalry and brigade of artillery attached to the division advanced to support the picquets; and Captain Ross, with four guns, was for some time engaged with those attached to the enemy's cavalry,

which were of much larger calibre. As the immense superiority of the enemy's force displayed itself, we fell back gradually towards the fortress (Almeida), upon the right of which the infantry of the division was posted, having its left in some enclosures near the windmill, about eight hundred yards from the place, and its right to the Coa, in a very broken and extensive position, which it was absolutely necessary to occupy, in order to cover the passage of the cavalry and artillery through the long defile leading to the bridge. After this was effected, the infantry retired by degrees, and in as good order as it was possible for them in ground so extremely intricate. A position close in front of the bridge was maintained as long as was necessary to give time for the troops which had passed to take up one behind the river; and the bridge was afterwards defended with the greatest gallantry, though, I am sorry to say, with considerable loss, by the Forty-third and part of the Ninety-fifth regiments. Towards the afternoon the firing ceased; and after it was dark, I withdrew the troops from the Coa and retired to this place.

"The troops behaved with the greatest gallantry.

(Signed) "R. CRAWFURD."

"To Lord Viscount Wellington,
&c. &c."

The reader has here General Crawfurd's own statement of this affair; Colonel Napier has, however, given another. It is necessary to quote a portion of that writer's account of this transaction. It is not, however, intended to bring an accusation against Colonel Napier of indulging in any personal ill-will towards the memory of Sir Thomas Picton. We have no reason to believe that these two officers were ever in communication; if they had been, it is not probable that Colonel Napier would have accused him of forgetting his duty to indulge in private animosity.

After giving the details of General Crawfurd's retreat to the bridge of Coa, Colonel Napier thus continues: "As the regiments passed the bridge, they planted themselves in loose order on the side of the mountain. The artillery drew up on the summit, and the cavalry were disposed in parties on the roads to the

right; because two miles higher up the stream there were fords, and beyond them the bridge of Castello Bom; and it was to be apprehended, that while the sixth corps was in front, the reserves and a division of the eighth corps, then on the Agueda, might pass at those places, and get between the division and Celerico. The river was, however, rising fast from the rains, and it was impossible to retreat further. The French skirmishers swarming on the right bank, opened a biting fire, which was returned as bitterly; the artillery on both sides played across the ravine; the sounds were repeated by numberless echoes; and the smoke rising, slowly resolved itself into an immense arch, spanning the whole chasm, and sparkling with the whirling fusees of the flying shells. The enemy gathered fast and thickly; his columns were discovered forming behind the high rocks, and a dragoon was seen to try the depth of the stream above; but two shots from the Fifty-second killed horse and man, and the carcasses floating between the hostile bands showed the river was impassable. The monotonous tones of a French drum were then heard: the next instant, the

head of a noble column darkened the long narrow bridge; a drummer, and an officer in a splendid uniform, leaped forward together, and the whole rushed on with loud cries.

"The depth of the ravine at first deceived the English soldiers' aim, and two-thirds of the passage was won ere a shot had brought down an enemy; yet, a few paces onwards, the line of death was traced, and the whole of the leading French section fell as one man. 'Still the gallant column pressed forward, but no foot could pass that terrible line; the killed and wounded rolled together, until the heap rose nearly even with the parapet, and the living mass behind melted away rather than gave back. The shouts of the British now rose loudly; but they were confidently answered; and, in half an hour, a second column, more numerous than the first, again crowded the bridge. This time, however, the range was better judged, and ere half the distance was won, the multitude was again torn, shattered, dispersed, and slain: ten or twelve men only succeeded in crossing, and took shelter under the rocks at the brink of the river. The skirmishing was again renewed, and a French

surgeon coming down to the very foot of the bridge, merely waved his handkerchief, and commenced dressing the wounded under the hottest fire. Nor was this touching appeal unheeded; every musket turned from him, although his still undaunted countrymen were preparing for a third attempt.

"The impossibility of forcing the passage was, however, become too apparent; and this last effort, made with feebler numbers and less energy, failed almost as soon as it commenced. Nevertheless, the combat was unnecessarily continued by the French, as a point of honour to cover the escape of those who had passed the bridge; by the English, from ignorance of their object. One of the enemy's guns was dismantled, a powder magazine blew up, and many continued to fall on both sides, until about four o'clock, when a heavy rain caused a momentary cessation of fire; the men among the rocks returned unmolested to their own party, the fight ceased, and Crawfurd retired behind the Pinhel river. Forty-four Portuguese, two hundred and seventy-two British, including twenty-eight officers, were killed, wounded, or taken; and it was at first supposed that Lieutenant

Dawson and half a company of the Fifty-second, which had been posted in the unfinished tower, were also captured; but that officer kept close until the evening, and then with great intelligence passed all the enemy's posts, and crossing the Coa at a ford, rejoined his regiment.

"In this action the French lost above a thousand men: the slaughter at the bridge was fearful to behold. But Massena claimed to have taken two guns, and it was true, for the guns intended to arm the unfinished tower near Almeida were lying dismounted at the foot of the building. They, however, belonged to the garrison of Almeida, not to the light division. That they were not mounted, and the tower garrisoned, was certainly a great negligence; the enemy's cavalry could not otherwise have fallen so dangerously on the left of the position, and the after investment of Almeida have been retarded. In other respects, the governor, severely censured by Crawfurd at the time for not opening his fire sooner and more vigorously, was unblamable: the whole affair had been so mismanaged by the general himself, that friends and enemies

were mingled together from the first, and the shots from the fortress would have killed both.

"During the fight General Picton came up *alone* from Pinhel. Crawfurd desired the support of the third division; it was *refused;* and, excited by some previous disputes, the generals separated after a sharp altercation. Picton was decidedly wrong, because Crawfurd's situation was one of extreme danger; he could not retire, and Massena might undoubtedly have thrown his reserves by the bridge of Castello Bom upon the right flank of the division, and destroyed it between the Coa and the Pinhel rivers.

"Picton and Crawfurd were, however, not formed by nature to act cordially together. The stern countenance, robust frame, saturnine complexion, caustic speech, and austere demeanour of the first, promised little sympathy with the short thick figure, dark flashing eyes, quick movements, and fiery temper of the second; nor did they often meet without a quarrel. Nevertheless, they had many points of resemblance in their characters, and fortunes. Both were inclined to harshness, and rigid in command; both prone to disobedience, yet

exacting entire submission from inferiors; and they were alike ambitious and craving of glory. They both possessed decided military talents, were enterprising and intrepid; yet neither were remarkable for skill in handling troops under fire. This also they had in common,—that both, after distinguished services, perished in arms fighting gallantly; and being celebrated for generals of division while living, have since their death been injudiciously spoken of as rivalling their great leader in war. That they were officers of rank and pretension is unquestionable, and Crawfurd more so than Picton; because the latter never had a separate command, and his opportunities were necessarily more circumscribed: but to compare either to the Duke of Wellington, displays ignorance of the men, and of the art they professed. If they had even comprehended the profound military and political combinations he was then conducting, the one would have carefully avoided fighting on the Coa, and the other, far from refusing, would have eagerly proffered his support."

That General Picton refused to co-operate with or assist General Crawfurd from a feeling of

personal animosity, is the charge which Colonel Napier has thrown upon his memory. Concerning this affair there is no written document whence information can be obtained; and Colonel Napier's account is, doubtless, drawn from the memory of those who were present at this battle. With every paper relating to General Picton before us, we can discover no allusion to this circumstance; nor does it live in the memory of his most intimate friends. A charge so seriously implicating a soldier's character should not be made without ample proof; and such Colonel Napier has not advanced. Circumstances which occur amid the tumult of a battle are seldom remembered with precision or reported with accuracy. We may be allowed to doubt whether the request was ever made, or the refusal given, in the decided manner in which they are stated to have been. But even granting that the facts were so, there are many means of accounting satisfactorily for such a refusal, without having recourse to a supposition which is the last that one officer should entertain of another; namely, that he sacrificed his fellow-soldiers to a private

pique. Can Colonel Napier confidently affirm what were the private instructions which General Picton had received from Lord Wellington at this time? We feel convinced he cannot: and although we are unable to say that there did exist private instructions which compelled General Picton to act as he is stated to have done, we believe that Colonel Napier is equally unable to declare that there did not. But the colonel was not inclined even to suppose that Picton was acting in obedience to his orders, when he left General Crawfurd to finish what he had begun; and, consequently, attributes to the worst of motives what might have been only a point of duty. Neither does this historian do Picton more justice when describing his general character: his uncompromising sense of honour, his undaunted courage, his devoted patriotism, and his love of glory—all these weigh as nothing to Colonel Napier, to prevent his representing him as endangering the safety of the whole army, together with his own and his country's honour, for the selfish gratification of one of the worst and most ignoble sentiments of the human heart. If any feelings so contemptible had ex-

istence in the mind of Sir Thomas Picton, then indeed his most intimate friends had little knowledge of his character, and those who were most constantly with him were most effectually deceived.

A gentleman who has contributed much valuable information to this memoir, and who, to use his own words, "knew Picton intimately both in the field and out of it," speaking of his patriotism, observed: "No hero of ancient Rome or Greece ever loved his country dearer, or was a more devoted soldier in her cause, than my lamented friend Sir Thomas Picton." And is this the man who would sacrifice her interests from so unworthy a motive as private animosity? Of this at least his countrymen must acquit him, and not allow the memory of one whose whole life was devoted to their cause to be thus traduced. But it is not thus that Colonel Napier must be met; the accusation is made, and Sir Thomas Picton is not here to answer it: one word from him might have been sufficient to convince even the gallant colonel, that if he refused bringing up his division to support General Crawfurd, he was not wrong.

The first question which now naturally occurs is, upon what authority does Colonel Napier ground his statement? Did he hear of Crawfurd's request and Picton's refusal, together with their sharp altercation, from either of the generals themselves? or did he hear it amidst the din of battle, whilst serving as lieutenant in the Forty-third regiment, then warmly engaged in defending the bridge? That he never heard of this rencontre from either Crawfurd or Picton, the writer has little hesitation in asserting. He must therefore have received the report from some third person, who ought to have heard it,—not from General Crawfurd, after the occurrence; for, by Colonel Napier's own showing, he would not have spoken well of Picton. But whoever informed him should have been present at the interview; and the gallant colonel was not justified in publishing so injurious a report to the memory of so distinguished an officer upon any other authority than that of an auricular witness.

Colonel Napier cannot be ignorant of the fact, that no other writer upon the Peninsular war mentions this interview. The Marquis

of Londonderry would certainly have been as likely to have heard the report of Picton's refusal, as any other officer from whom the gallant colonel could have gleaned his information; but the marquis does not even hint at the subject. But one, and that a still stronger evidence that Colonel Napier's information may be incorrect, is, that General Crawfurd, in his report to Lord Wellington already quoted, makes no mention whatever of having applied to General Picton for his support, and that it was refused. Now any military man will admit, that had General Crawfurd made this request to Picton, and met with a refusal upon no better grounds than personal altercation and disagreement, General Crawfurd would have reported his conduct to the commander of the forces, which would beyond a doubt have led to a public investigation; and at the same time it is not unreasonable to suppose that Crawfurd would readily have alluded to General Picton's refusal to assist him, to divert in some measure the asperity of remark to which he had exposed himself by his own rashness.

We have said, we think, sufficient to induce

any unprejudiced person to reject this imputation upon Picton's character. It is a serious charge, unsupported by evidence and contradicted by probability; and, until further proof is adduced, we are justified in assuming that this passage in Colonel Napier's work was occasioned by erroneous information.

It would be unsatisfactory to the reader to peruse the various reasons which, in a military point of view, might have induced General Picton to refuse bringing up his division. We have been assured by many a distinguished officer, that if Sir Thomas Picton did refuse to support General Crawfurd at the bridge of Coa, that refusal was not produced by any feeling of personal animosity, but was either in accordance with the private instructions which he had received, or a strong impression, the result of a profound military judgment, that by bringing up his division he would either interfere with Lord Wellington's more enlarged designs, or bring on what that general was most anxious to avoid—a general engagement with the enemy.

The result of the conflict, even by Colonel Napier's own showing, proved that Picton's

"refusal" was not ill judged. The fight was even over before, in all probability, the third division could have been brought up; for General Crawfurd, in his report, says, "towards the afternoon the firing ceased." But enough has been said upon this subject; the writer's only object has been to show that Picton was too much a soldier to sacrifice the interests of the army. The comments of Colonel Napier upon the character and abilities of General Picton, together with his concluding remarks upon the ignorance of those who compare him to the Duke of Wellington, will be again brought before the reader, after he has had an opportunity of forming a judgment from the actions of Sir Thomas Picton: one thing however is evident, and which the reader cannot be too early made acquainted with; namely, that Colonel Napier is apparently reluctant to give strength to the comparison by the slightest breath of praise, or even by a too frequent mention of the subject of this memoir.*

* Since writing these remarks upon Colonel Napier's account of the affair at the bridge of Coa, we have been favoured with an introduction to an officer who belonged to

the third division, and who was actually with General Picton at Pinhel when the battle was being fought at the bridge. This officer holds a high and distinguished name in the service: it was, as he himself observes, his "good fortune to hold an appointment on the staff of Sir Thomas Picton;" but he adds, "I also enjoyed his friendship, which I shall ever esteem as the greatest honour and happiness of my life." To this high-minded individual we are indebted for many interesting particulars of Sir Thomas Picton, and especially for the following facts connected with the affair at Coa. "We were quartered in the neighbourhood of Pinhel," observed this officer; "General Picton's head-quarters being at that place on the 24th of July. We heard firing in the direction of General Crawfurd's position; but as this was so common an occurrence, it was thought but little of. General Picton was, during the whole of this time, either in Pinhel, or occupied with some of his usual duties; and as to riding out alone, it was a thing which he scarcely ever did, and certainly not on this day: he was generally accompanied by myself and several others of his staff: but of this I am quite certain, that he did not ride out on this day in the direction of the bridge of Coa; neither do I think that he was half a mile from Pinhel during the whole time. And farther, I can state that the first intimation which we received at Pinhel of the serious affair which had occurred at the bridge, was by the body of an officer who had been killed at the bridge being brought back on the following day: this officer had left us early in the morning of the 24th, and was brought back dead on the 25th, having fallen during the fight. Any attempt to bring up the third division in time to support the light division, (unless information had been sent to General Picton when General Crawfurd commenced falling back,) would have been ridiculous, as the country could not have been traversed by infantry in less than three hours. With regard to any personal ill-feeling

existing between Generals Picton and Crawfurd, I can only say, that I never knew the former to express himself in any but the most friendly terms of General Crawfurd. I certainly upon one occasion heard him observe, 'That d——d fighting fellow Crawfurd will some day get us into a scrape:' but this was not uttered at all in an unfriendly tone; on the contrary, I think he had a great respect for the daring courage in General Crawfurd's character, at the same time that he always regretted his want of prudence and consideration."—This is a valuable and indeed conclusive testimony in favour of the judgment we have already formed upon this subject. The officer from whom it was obtained is certainly as valuable an authority as any that Colonel Napier could select; his means of information were peculiarly favourable, for he was upon the spot, and speaks from personal knowledge. The conclusion which probability favoured is thus confirmed by unequivocal and irrefragable authority; and this ambiguous passage in the life of Picton is henceforward clear.

CHAPTER XVI.

Fall of Almeida.—Plans of Massena.—Letter from General Picton to Colonel Pleydel.—Battle of Busacos.—Picton's Letter descriptive of that affair.—Whimsical incident during the Battle.

After the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, the next place for investment was Almeida; and the enemy having secured the former important fortress, began to push some troops over the Coa; thus cutting off all hope which the garrison of Almeida might have entertained of relief from the allied army. As no effort was made by Lord Wellington to drive them back to their original ground, on the 27th they advanced to the river Pinhel, when Lord Wellington, unwilling to hazard an engagement in his present situation, determined upon falling back to a more concentrated position.

The cavalry was therefore ordered to Alverca to cover the retreat: the light division marched to Celerico, where the head-quarters were formed; the first division proceeded to Penhancos; and General Picton, with the third, was ordered to Carapichina; while the fourth was to continue to occupy Guarda, in order to keep open the communication with General Hill. In this line the British army remained for several days, anxiously waiting and watching the movements of the enemy.

On the 3rd of August, however, the French again retired beyond the Coa, and the road to Almeida was once more free; but Lord Wellington did not alter his plans before Massena had set himself down before Almeida, which was not until the 14th, when Lord Wellington again took up the same position from which he had retired at the end of July. The fortress of Almeida did not, however, make that resistance which, from its strength, the British general had been led to expect. The French were dilatory in their proceedings; and had it not been for a fatal occurrence, either the effect of accident or treason, which decided at once the fate of the fortress, they might have been

delayed for a considerable period in its reduction; but on the first day's firing the magazine exploded, shattering the defences to a heap of ruins, and compelling the defenders to accept the terms which the French general thought proper to propose.

Immediately Lord Wellington became acquainted with the fall of Almeida, he ordered the army to fall back upon its previous position. But still a degree of inertness pervaded the operations of Massena; he hesitated to advance, and seemed anticipating the inconveniences and disabilities to which he would be exposed by driving Wellington into the fastnesses he had prepared.

By their depredations and cruelties the French had rendered the inhabitants of the country in their rear implacable enemies. They had no regular commissariat, and in fact depended solely upon the chance resources of the country for their support: these were of course soon exhausted, and their only hope was then placed upon France. But to send supplies through Spain with any escort short of an army would be absurd, as the Guerrilla parties were so numerous, and their local knowledge so

perfect, that they could annihilate a small force with little danger to themselves. Massena was accused of ignorance with respect to the defences prepared by Wellington; but it appeared as if he had a just idea of the difficulties which he would have to encounter; for although he was well convinced that the army under his command was nearly threefold as numerous as that of the British, still he would not commence his invasion of Portugal until assured of the co-operation of Regnier. That general, on the 1st of September, was at Sabugal, threatening to advance on Guarda, and turn the right of the English position; while almost at the same time the French cavalry attacked the British picquets in front. The plans of Massena appeared now ripe for execution, and Lord Wellington made every preparation for falling back upon the lines of Torres Vedras, the only position of defence which he could hope to maintain against the overwhelming force by which he was opposed.

The plan of the French general appears to have been at this period to enter Portugal by three different routes: a corps, under Junot, was to advance by the line of Pinhel; another, under

Ney, by Alverca; and a third, under Regnier, by Guarda. These intentions are now well known; but the following letter from General Picton to Colonel Pleydel will convey an idea of the uncertainty which at that time existed in the British army with respect to the movements of the enemy.

"Laurosa, 10th September 1810.

"My dear Colonel,

"Your kind letter of the 20th of July arrived in proper time, and I have very many thanks to return you for the satisfactory accounts it contained. After a variety of movements, which it will be superfluous to detail, as you will have seen them in the public papers, we at length arrived here, nearly in the centre of Portugal, on the 3rd instant; and there is no hazarding a conjecture when we may move, or in what direction, as our operations will depend entirely on those of the enemy, which we are watching. The enemy's force threatens the whole of the frontier from the right bank of the Tagus as far as the Douro; but a ridge of lofty and in most parts impracticable mountains (the Estrella) intervenes, and will confine their

principal offensive operations to two lines—the one to the north, and the other to the south, of this extensive chain. The army under Lord Wellington is so distributed as to attend to both these objects. There are about twenty-five or twenty-six thousand, including Portuguese, with Lord Wellington, on the north line, where they can easily unite to oppose an enemy attempting to penetrate on that side; and the country affords many good posts, where we can contend advantageously with greatly superior numbers, without any apprehension of having our flanks turned or being circumvented.

"Lieutenant-general Hill, with nearly an equal force, is stationed in the rear of Castello Branco, in front of the river Zizzara, with his right resting on the Tagus, to oppose any attempt to penetrate on that side; and we are so relatively situated as to be able to communicate and interchange support by four easy marches; and by this distribution of our force we completely cover our line of communication with Lisbon. I think our position, generally considered, is much more advantageous than it has been at any period since my arrival in this country; and there is no

doubt but the enemy will experience much difficulty and hard fighting before they get the better of us.

"Lord Wellington's plan appears calculated to draw the enemy on into the interior of the country before he engages in a serious affair: a decisive defeat in such a situation would be followed by the entire destruction of their army; for the whole peasantry of the country are furnished with arms and ammunition, and are most inveterate in their hatred of them, from a recollection of the recent enormities and cruelties they have everywhere committed on the frontiers; and the mountainous and extremely difficult nature of the country will allow them abundant opportunities of acting without much risk. Lord Wellington has the full confidence as well of the army as of the Portuguese nation; and, as far as I am capable of forming a judgment, I really think it was not possible to have made choice of a person possessing more essential qualities for so important and difficult a command.

"This place (Laurosa) is situated in one of the most beautifully romantic countries I ever saw. It is a succession of hills and valleys,

most magnificently wooded, bordering upon a stupendous ridge of mountains, which rise in succession above each other, and the remotest of which lose their summits in the clouds; and it is so thickly interspersed with towns and villages, that we everywhere find abundant cantonments for the troops.

"Since we have been in constant movement, I have enjoyed perfect health, notwithstanding the extreme heat we have experienced during the last and this month. It has become sensibly cooler within these few last days, and, in consequence of some heavy rains, the troublesome flies are beginning to disappear. I have very lately written both to my uncle and to General Este; therefore I shall only beg my remembrances when you see them.

"With my best wishes,

"My dear colonel, very faithfully yours,

"THOMAS PICTON."

It was within a few days after General Picton had written this letter, that the French general totally altered all the plans which by his demonstrations he was supposed to have formed. He suddenly concentrated the whole of

his army, and commenced a rapid march along the right bank of the Mondego, in the hope of securing Coimbra before the junction of General Hill's corps should enable Lord Wellington to offer him any effectual resistance.

"The road selected by Massena for his advance was of the worst description, full of natural impediments, and by all the officers by whom it had been surveyed considered almost impracticable. The direct, and in every respect preferable, road to Coimbra and Lisbon runs along the left bank of the Mondego. By this Lord Wellington retreated in a line parallel with that followed by his opponent. Had Massena determined on advancing by the road on the south side of the Mondego, he must have previously encountered the British army in the strong passes of the Estrella, a high mountain-chain extending from the Tagus to the Mondego. This, however, did not agree with his project of the campaign; and, notwithstanding its numerous disadvantages, he directed his march along the road to the northward of the river. After passing Viseu, the road declines from a ridge into a lower and more level country, and is subsequently

crossed by the Sierra de Busacos, which terminates abruptly on the Mondego. On the southern bank of that river there is another range, called the Sierra de Murcella, which forms an obstacle of equal magnitude to the advance in that quarter."*

One of these ridges must be crossed in order to approach Lisbon from the north; and so soon as Massena gave demonstrations of selecting the heights of Busacos, Lord Wellington pushed the whole of his force over the river, and took up a position a little in the rear of that mountain. This was during the 20th and 21st of September. Sir Rowland Hill, with his division, had not yet joined the army; and General Leith's corps was not come up, but was engaged in passing the river; consequently it is probable that if the French had at once made their attack, they might have succeeded in forcing the pass. But Massena was not on the spot; and although Ney, anxious not to lose the favourable opportunity, would at once have commenced battle, he was unwilling to do so upon his own responsibility, and the moment was lost. This pro-

* Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns.

duced a delay of several days, both generals being desirous not to lose any advantage in this trial of strength.

The whole of Wellington's force was assembled before the enemy made any serious movement. By the 26th the British were thus posted:—General Hill, with the second division, had to guard the passage of the river, and prevent an attack by the declivities on the right of the British position. Next in the line was General Leith's corps; and on the left of this, General Picton, with his division, protecting the pass of St. Antonio de Cantara, where it was expected that the enemy would make the greatest efforts to effect a passage. About a mile on the left of General Picton was the first division, commanded by General Spencer; the line being then continued by General Crawfurd's light division; and last of all, defending the extreme left, the fourth, under General Cole, the flank of which was protected by an almost perpendicular declivity. Here, then, Lord Wellington determined to wait, and, if necessary, to give battle: the position was one which hardly any but a madman would have thought of attacking, being co-

vered in front by deep gorges and pathless defiles.

The Marquis of Londonderry, in his Narrative, remarks: "The principal inconvenience attending this place as a fighting ground for our army arose out of its extent, for it was manifestly too capacious to be occupied aright by sixty thousand men; whereas it is essential to the constitution of a military post, that it be easy of egress as it is difficult of access, and that its flanks as well as its centre be well secured. But when ground is too extensive for the troops destined to hold it, the latter object can never be perfectly attained; and in the present instance we could not but feel, that any serious endeavour to turn our left by the Milheada road must in the end be attended with success. Strange to say, however, Marshal Massena, an officer whose reputation came second to that of no marshal in the French service, made no effort of the kind; on the contrary, he led his columns through the passes above described, and up the face of heights approximating very nearly to the perpendicular, and thus devoted them to destruction, from the hands of men posted, as has been already mentioned,

on their summits. Had he acted by the advice of Lord Wellington," continues the gallant marquis, "I think he could not have adopted a course better calculated to insure defeat, and that too with a loss to the conquerors trifling, out of all the proportion which usually attends even upon success."

It fell to the lot of General Picton and his division to take an active and conspicuous part in repulsing the enemy upon this occasion; and it may be considered as the first opportunity which he had of distinguishing himself under the command of Lord Wellington. The post occupied by the third division was the key to the pass of St. Antonio de Cantara, and was in consequence the principal object of Massena's attack, as it was evidently his intention to force, and not to turn, the British position. From this ridge the enemy could be seen bivouacked on a mountain plain: their encampment was animated during the day by the glistening of bayonets, the movements of squadrons of cavalry and detached parties of tirailleurs, who were occasionally sent up the mountain steeps to skir-

mish with the advanced picquets of the allies. At night the watch-fires discovered their position.

On the 26th Lord Wellington's army was drawn up in expectation of an attack; every movement in the enemy's camp indicated such an intention. Towards noon a mass of infantry was observed filing into the French quarters; this was the eighth corps, consisting of about fifteen thousand men—an addition to their force which was not a very agreeable contemplation to the British. Still the position of the allies presented an imposing aspect, as the sun shone upon the glittering points with which every eminence was covered. But there was something more inspiriting to the English general than his position, —he could see confidence in the countenances of his men; and the cheer which greeted him as he rode along his line conveyed a happy assurance that he might trust them. They had long been submitting to retreat, but they were not disheartened; and now that they had hopes of meeting the enemy, the young soldier and the veteran felt alike

anxious for the conflict: yet the 26th was passed without a battle.*

On the 27th, long before the dawn, the

* The night was cold, and the position occupied by the troops exposed them to the inclement blast which swept over the mountains; even the hardy veteran shrunk within his scanty covering. The young soldiers, however, and even the young officers, endured with much less patience their mountain couch. A party of these latter, (to one of whom we are indebted for this anecdote,) tired of the coldness of their situation, resolved to try whether the enemy were equally inactive: accordingly Captain Urquhart, with Lieutenants Tyler, Macpherson, and Ouseley, of the Forty-fifth, walked down the steep slope towards the advanced posts occupied by the enemy, and arrived at the spot from whence the artillery had been withdrawn only a short time previously. Here they found some straw, which offered so strong a temptation to obtain a few minutes' repose, that each ensconced himself beneath a heap, and prepared to enjoy their good fortune. They were soon fast asleep; even the roll of the drums was unheeded; and the first sound that broke their rest was the clash of bayonets. This ominous sound effectually aroused them, and they scampered back to their regiments with admirable expedition,—a retrograde movement which was considerably accelerated by a strong impression that they could hear the enemy coming up the hill. Upon reaching their line, they found the regiments formed, and silently waiting the attack. To fall-in without being observed by the colonel (Mead) was out of the question: they had been long missed, and he had sent orderlies in all directions after them; and he now pounced upon them as they approached, full of indignation at this infringement upon military dis-

Plan of Operations
at the
Sierra de Busacos.

A. *Bivouac of the French Army*
B. *French Cavalry & Commisariat*
D. *Heads of the Enemy's columns of attack formed during the night in the valley below the ridge*
– – *Direction in which the Enemy manoeuvred and the Road which he took to turn the left of Lord Wellington's Position*

Coimbra

1. *Point where the allied Army passed the River*
2. *Camps of convenience and villages the cantonments of the army previous to its entering into the position on the ridge of Busacos.*
3. *Grand road of communication made by the Army*
4. *Position of the allied Army when the Enemy's columns attacked Gen^l Picton's Division previous to General's Hill and Leith coming up to his support.*
5. *Roads by which the Army withdrew in three Columns towards Coimbra*
6. *General Pane's force watching the Bridge of Murcella*

Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street

French were in motion. But the events of this day are described by Picton himself in the following letter to his friend Colonel Pleydel:—

cipline. He called loudly to them, "There you are! I'll report every one of you to the general; you shall all be tried for leaving your ranks while in front of the enemy!" Observing at this moment that they were attempting to fall-in and avoid further castigation, he assailed them with renewed eloquence. "Stop, sirs, stop,—your names, for every one of you shall be punished,—it's desertion;" and a great deal more he would have added, but the French were on the move; and each officer having given his name, without waiting for any further observations, occupied his post in the ready-formed ranks, much chagrined at the unfortunate event of their expedition and its probable result; but the fight soon began, and every other thought was absorbed in the heat of battle. After the enemy had been repulsed, the firing ceased, and the allies were falling back upon Coimbra. Colonel Mead, who was a severe disciplinarian, and possessed a most inveterately good memory, resolved to fulfil his promise, and report the offending officers to General Picton. Seeing Lieutenant Macpherson, he called to him, and in a tone of severity said, "Well, sir, you remember last night, I suppose?" Macpherson bowed with no very enviable recollections. "Ah, it's a breach of discipline not to be forgotten," continued the colonel, with a stern and uncompromising look.

"Where is Urquhart?"

"Killed," replied the lieutenant.

"Ah!" grunted out the disciplinarian, "it's well for him. But where's Ouseley, sir?"

"Killed, sir," again responded Macpherson.

"Cadaceira, 3rd November 1810.

"MY DEAR COLONEL,

"To give you some idea of the affair of Busacos, which took place on the 27th September, I enclose you a sketch of the relative situation of the two armies, taken at the time,

"Bah!" exclaimed the colonel in a still louder tone, as if actually enraged at being thus deprived of the opportunity to punish their breach of military discipline. As a last resource, however, he inquired

"Where is Tyler?"

"Mortally wounded, sir," was the reply.

This was too much for the old colonel's patience; so, with a look of anger, not at all allied to either regret or repentance, he rode off, leaving his only remaining victim in a state of much uncertainty. Two days after this rencontre, Lieutenant Macpherson, having received a message from his friend Tyler, who with the rest of the wounded had been carried into Coimbra, requesting to see him, he applied to Colonel Mead for leave to visit the town, stating at the same time that his object in doing so was "to attend (as he thought) the dying moments of his friend." The colonel had not, however, forgotten Macpherson's offence, and he took this opportunity to punish him. "No, no," said he in a voice which seemed to forbid all further solicitation, "you shan't go; you haven't deserved it, sir; go to your duty." Macpherson shortly after this met General Picton, and to him he stated the request which his chum Tyler had made, and Colonel Mead's refusal to grant him leave. Picton was indignant: "What! not let you go!" he exclaimed in his usually forcible and energetic manner; "d—me! you shall go—and tell Colonel Mead I say so; d'ye hear, sir?"

by the assistant quartermaster-general of the third division. It is merely a rough draught, but conveys a sufficiently strong representation as well of the position of Busacos as of that of Murcella, where it was Lord Wellington's original intention to concentrate his army and oppose the further advance of the enemy: but General Massena, after following us for some time on that road, suddenly crossed the river Mondego, and endeavoured by forced marches to cut us off from the city of Coimbra, where we had considerable depôts. To counteract this movement, Lord Wellington passed the Mondego on the 20th and 21st of September with the whole of the army, except Lieutenant-general Hill's and Major-general Leith's divisions, and occupied the position where the action took place. I had been ordered on the 25th

The young lieutenant both heard and obeyed. Thanking the general, he set off first to deliver Picton's message to the infuriated colonel, who swore "that all discipline had ceased in the army;" and then to Coimbra, where he found his friend Tyler not dead or dying, but wonderfully recovered from the severe wound which he had received, and prepared with an excellent breakfast for Macpherson and some more of his companions, whom he had contrived to allure into a participation of the good cheer he had provided, by the invitation to "attend his dying moments."

to detach Major-general Lightburne's brigade to reinforce the division under Sir Brent Spencer, and there remained with me only three British and two Portuguese regiments to defend the ridge from Saint Antonio de Cantara to the hill of Busacos, a space of above a mile and a half. The enemy was so concentrated on the 26th, as equally to threaten the right, left, and centre of our position ; and, from their apparent combinations, it was uncertain against which point they would direct their principal attack.

" On the evening of the 26th I detached the strongest regiment of the division, the Eighty-eighth, nearly a mile to the left of the pass of St. Antonio, to communicate with Sir Brent Spencer, and observe that part of the line which was not occupied by any troops. The Seventy-fourth regiment and the two Portuguese battalions, with twelve pieces of cannon, were stationed for the immediate defence of the pass; and the Forty-fifth regiment was kept in reserve. A sharp fire of musketry was heard on the left a short time before daylight, and immediately after fourteen pieces of cannon, from an opposite height, opened upon the

pass, and a large column attempted to force it in mass; but so incessant and destructive a fire was kept up by the light corps of the division on their flank, and by the Seventy-fourth and a Portuguese battalion on their front, that, though they long persisted with great gallantry and perseverance, they never were able to gain an inch of ground, and were ultimately compelled to abandon the attempt in great confusion.

"During this time a very heavy column penetrated, on the left of my position, close to the hill of Busacos, occupied by the Eighty-eighth regiment, and four companies of the Forty-fifth regiment, which appeared to be engaged in an unequal contest with very superior numbers. These regiments, after the enemy had completely gained the summit of the hill, most gallantly attacked them with their bayonets, and drove them off with great slaughter. Convinced that the enemy would make no impression upon the pass of St. Antonio, from which they were completely repulsed, I galloped towards the left, to join the Forty-fifth and Eighty-eighth regiments, who still continued engaged, and, to my great

surprise, found the enemy in possession of a strong rocky point in the centre of my line, and the light infantry companies of the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth regiments (who had been stationed with the light corps in advance) driven in and retreating before them in disorder. With some difficulty I rallied them, drove the enemy from the rocky point with the bayonet, and with the assistance of a Portuguese battalion, which opportunely came up at that moment, I succeeded in forcing them to abandon the hill, and cross the ravine in great confusion.

"There was another feeble attempt made by the enemy to force the hill; but this was easily repulsed by Major-general Leith, who joined the army at that moment with the First, Ninth, and Thirty-eighth regiments: Lieutenant-general Hill also joined the army about an hour after, with ten British, and, I believe, eight Portuguese regiments. The evening of the 27th was employed by the enemy in a variety of movements and fresh combinations, and we fully expected a renewal of the attack on the following morning. Unfortunately we were disappointed: the enemy appeared in movement

the whole of the 28th, as if concentrating for the purpose of attacking the left of the hill and convent of Busacos; but towards the evening very considerable columns were discovered filing off through the mountains on our left, towards the main road leading from Oporto to Coimbra and Lisbon, and it became apparent that they had given up all hopes of forcing our position, and were endeavouring, by a circuitous march, to turn our left, and occupy Coimbra before us. Lord Wellington in consequence marched in three columns, at two o'clock on the morning of the 29th, and took up a position to cover Coimbra on the same evening. Coimbra at this season, when the river Mondego is everywhere fordable, has no advantages of a defensive position; it became, therefore, necessary to retreat, and occupy the great line which covers Lisbon, at the distance of about thirty miles, with the right of the army resting upon the Tagus at Alhandra, and its left on the sea near Torres Vedras, where we have been since the 7th of October.

"Massena's army has its head-quarters at the village of Sobral, about two miles in front of the position occupied by the third division;

and his army is cantoned in the villages in his rear, and extending towards the Tagus on his left. He is apparently waiting for reinforcements, very badly off for provisions, with his ammunition wholly cut off. His situation is every day becoming more and more critical, and his difficulty of procuring subsistence for his army must be daily increasing. If a considerable army is not despatched in time to his assistance, little less than a miracle can save him from ruin.

"Our army is healthy, well equipped in every respect, and regularly supplied with provisions. Our eating numbers, according to the commissary-general's returns, exceeds thirty-five thousand men; and we certainly have seven or eight and twenty thousand bayonets in the field, exclusive of cavalry. The Portuguese may bring nearly the same number; in addition to which we have about seven thousand Spaniards with the Marquis of Romana,—a miserable mob, on which we have no reliance. I do not much like our position; it is too extensive to be strong, and there is great difficulty in communicating between the different posts,

on account of the extreme badness of the roads at this season of the year.

"I hope you have enjoyed your health. I learn from General Este that my uncle continues in good health and spirits. I wrote to him by the last packet. Will you have the goodness to offer him my best respects, and say that I am perfectly well? With my best wishes,

"My dear colonel,

"Very faithfully yours,

"THOMAS PICTON."

An incident occurred during this battle, which, although trifling in itself, at the moment caused much amusement to the soldiers. After General Picton had made every disposition for the reception of the enemy, and visited the particular posts occupied by his division, as narrated in the preceding letter, having been awake nearly the whole night, a short time before the day broke he wrapped himself in his cloak, put on a coloured nightcap, (his usual custom,) and after giving orders to some of his staff that he might be called upon the

least alarm, he stretched himself upon the ground to snatch a short repose. Possessing that command over the senses peculiar to strong minds, he was instantly asleep. Brief, however, were his slumbers; the sound of musketry on the left suddenly aroused him; when, throwing off his cloak and putting on his hat, he sprung into his saddle, and was the next moment at the head of his troops defending the pass of Saint Antonio. From thence, when this point was secured, he galloped to the spot where the enemy had obtained a partial success. Here his presence retrieved the lost ground; he rallied the retreating troops, and urged them again to the attack. Major Smith placed himself at their head, and fell leading the attack. Picton, at the same time, placed himself at the head of a Portuguese battalion: the eyes of the men were fixed upon him as he cried "Forward!" and pointed towards the foe. When arrived within a few yards, with some encouraging words and a loud "hurra," he gave the word to charge, and at the same moment taking off his hat, he waved it over his head, totally unconscious that it was still covered by his nightcap. His

appearance at this moment was sufficiently grotesque, and caused much merriment.

This incident for an instant diverted the minds of the soldiers from the approaching conflict: but it was only for a moment; giving one loud cheer, they dashed boldly forward; the echo was a groan, as, borne back by the impetuosity of this charge, the foe rolled over the craggy steep. But to continue the details of this conflict.

While the attack was being made upon General Picton's division, Ney advanced two columns; the one under Loison, and the other commanded by Marmont: these made an effort to force the heights occupied by the light division. They came on at a rapid pace with much intrepidity; the path was even more difficult and precipitous than in front of the third division; still they pressed on, and nearly gained the summit of one of the ridges, in the rear of which the Forty-third, Fifty-second, and Ninety-fifth were drawn up in line. These regiments allowed the foe to advance within a few yards without firing a shot; but as soon as they were near the edge, one volley was poured in with terrific effect. The advancing

column staggered; but not so the English: Crawfurd, at the top of his voice, gave the word to charge, and in a moment the whole line was in motion; the enemy, tired and breathless with their exertions in ascending the steep, made but a feeble resistance to the destructive bayonets of our men. In the spirited language of the Marquis of Londonderry, "The enemy, unable to retreat and afraid to resist, were rolled down the steep like a torrent of hailstones driven before a powerful wind; and not the bayonets only, but the very hands of some of our brave fellows, became in an instant red with the blood of the fugitives." The enemy were thus foiled in all their attempts to force a passage over this mountainous ridge; and they retreated for the night with all the disappointment of defeat, besides the loss of between four and five thousand men in killed and wounded.

CHAPTER XVII.

Colonel Napier's account of the Battle of Busacos examined. — General Picton's letter to Lord Wellington. — Erroneous statements in the "History of the Peninsular War."

We are compelled to advance a second complaint against Colonel Napier's "History of the Peninsular War." Any reader, in perusing the relation given of the battle of Busacos in that work, would be led to believe that General Picton was either not personally concerned, or was merely a spectator of the conflict. To General Leith and Colonel Cameron is attributed the merit of rescuing the third division from its "*critical situation.*" A few extracts from Colonel Napier's account of the battle of Busacos will assist the reader to form an opinion of the justice rendered to Pic-

ton by this historian. Referring to the attack upon General Picton's division, he observes:

"The allies resisted vigorously, and six guns played along the ascent with grape; but in less than half an hour the French were close upon the summit—so swiftly and with such astonishing power did they scale the mountain, overthrowing everything that opposed their progress. The right of the third division was forced back; the Eighth Portuguese regiment was broken to pieces; and the hostile masses gained the highest part of the crest, just between the third and the fifth divisions. The leading battalions immediately established themselves amongst the crowning rocks, and a confused mass wheeled to the right, intending to sweep the summit of the Sierra; but at that moment Lord Wellington caused two guns to open with grape upon their flank; a heavy musketry was still poured into their front; and in a little time the Forty-fifth and the Eighty-eighth regiments charged so furiously, that even fresh men could not have withstood them."

* * * * * *

"Meanwhile, the French who first gained the crest had re-formed their ranks, with the right

resting upon a precipice overhanging the reverse side of the Sierra: thus the position was in fact gained, if any reserve had been at hand; for the greater part of the third division, British and Portuguese, were fully engaged, and a misty cloud capped the summit, so that the enemy, thus ensconced amongst the rocks, could not be seen except by General Leith. That officer had put his first brigade in motion to his own left, as soon as he perceived the vigorous impression made on the third division, and he was now coming on rapidly; but he had two miles of rugged ground to pass in a narrow column before he could mingle in the fight. Keeping the Royals in reserve, he directed the Thirty-eighth to turn the right of the French; and as the precipice prevented this, Colonel Cameron, of the Ninth, who had been informed by a staff-officer of the critical state of affairs, formed his regiment in line under a heavy fire, and, without returning a single shot, ran in upon and drove the grenadiers from the rocks with irresistible bravery; and yet, with excellent discipline, refraining from pursuit, lest the crest of the position should be again lost; for the mountain was so rugged that it

was impossible to judge clearly of the general state of the action. The victory was, however, secure."

This, then, is Colonel Napier's statement of the facts connected with the battle of Busacos: a statement so completely at variance with the private letter of General Picton, that if one be correct, the other must be erroneous. If Picton's account be false, it must be wilfully so: it is of the utmost importance, therefore, to his character to investigate it.

We have fortunately found, amongst the manuscripts of the general, a document of some value in deciding this point. It is a copy of a letter addressed to Lord Wellington, giving a minute and circumstantial detail of the disposition and conduct of Sir Thomas Picton's division, together with the support it received from any other corps belonging to the army.

"Cadaceira, November 10th, 1810.

"My Lord,

"In consequence of an extraordinary report, which has been circulated with a good deal of assiduity, it becomes necessary that I should make a written detailed report to your lordship of the circumstances which preceded and

attended the action which took place upon the height of Busacos on the morning of the 27th of September, inasmuch as they relate to myself and the troops I had the honour of commanding on that occasion.

"Major-general Lightburne, with the Fifth and Eighty-third regiments, was detached to the left, and did not act under my orders.

"On the evening of the 25th, by orders from your lordship, I occupied that part of the Sierra de Busacos which is immediately connected with the pass of St. Antonio de Cantara, with Colonel Mackinnon's brigade, consisting of the Forty-fifth, Seventy-fourth, and Eighty-eighth regiments, amounting to about one thousand three hundred rank and file; and with the Ninth and Twenty-first Portuguese regiments under Colonel de Champalimaud: upon the whole about three thousand men.

"All the movements of the enemy during the 26th indicating a determination of attacking the position early in the following morning, I made what dispositions I judged necessary for the defence of the post that evening; and there being an unoccupied space of considerably above a mile between my left and Sir Brent Spencer's divi-

sion, immediately after sunset (when it could not be observed by the enemy), I detached Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace, with the Eighty-eighth regiment, to take up an intermediate position, and communicate with the hill of Busacos and the main body of my division at the pass of Saint Antonio.

"The troops in the immediate neighbourhood of the pass were visited by me on their respective posts by daybreak; and, immediately after, Colonel Mackinnon returned from visiting the Eighty-eighth regiment, and reported that the enemy was collecting in the ravine, opposite the position occupied by that regiment; in consequence of which I immediately detached Major Gwynne, of the Forty-fifth regiment, with four companies, to reinforce that post.

"A few minutes after, when the day began to clear up, a smart firing of musketry was heard on the left, apparently proceeding from the point where the Eighty-eighth regiment had been stationed; and after a short suspense, a violent cannonade opened upon the pass of Saint Antonio, and at the same time a heavy column compelled the advanced picquet of the division to fall back, and, pressing forward

with great impetuosity, endeavoured to push up the road and force the pass. The light corps of the division, unable to resist such a superiority of numbers in front, was most judiciously thrown in upon the flank of the advancing column by Lieutenant-colonel Williams; and it was received with so steady and well-directed a fire by the Twenty-first Portuguese regiment of the line, and three companies of the Seventy-fourth regiment, that moved up to their support on the left, that, after a long struggle, and repeated desperate attempts to effect their object, (during which they suffered much from the well-directed fire of the Portuguese artillery, under Major Arentschild,) they were ultimately under the necessity of desisting, though a severe firing of cannon and musketry still continued.

"About this period the fire of musketry on the left appearing to increase and draw nearer, I directed Colonel Mackinnon to take the immediate command of the troops at the pass of Saint Antonio, and rode towards the left, with the assistant adjutant-general, Major Packenham; leaving my aid-de-camp, Captain Cuthbert, and the assistant quartermaster-gene-

ral, Captain Anderdon, to bring up as fast as possible one battalion of the Eighth Portuguese regiment, and the five remaining companies of the Forty-fifth regiment.

"On reaching the high rocky point about half-way between the pass of Saint Antonio and the hill of Busacos, I found the light companies of the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth regiments retiring in disorder, and the head of the enemy's column, already in possession of the strong rocky point, deliberately firing down upon us, and the remainder of a large column pushing up the hill with great rapidity. Whilst endeavouring to rally the light infantry companies with the assistance of Major Packenham, I was joined by Major Smith of the Forty-fifth regiment; and we succeeded in forming them under the immediate fire of the enemy, not more than sixty yards distant. Major Smith most gallantly led them to the charge, and gained possession of the rock, driving the enemy before him; but, I am concerned to say, fell in the moment of victory, for which we were chiefly indebted to his animating example.

"The assistant quartermaster-general hav-

ing fortunately brought up a battalion of the Eighth Portuguese regiment, commanded by Major Birmingham, at this critical period, I personally led and directed their attack on the flank of the enemy's column; and we completely succeeded in driving them in great confusion and disorder down the hill and across the ravine.

"Not being able to discover any enemy upon the ridge to my left, I immediately returned to the pass of Saint Antonio, where the firing of musketry and cannon still continued with little apparent abatement. On my arrival I learned from Colonel Mackinnon that the enemy had not been able to make any impression during my absence.

"At this moment Major-general Leith's aid-de-camp came to report the arrival of that general and his division; upon which I rode from the post of Saint Antonio to the road of communication, and directed the leading regiment of the brigade to proceed without loss of time to the left, as I had no occasion for assistance. General Leith's brigade in consequence marched on, and arrived in time to join the five companies of the Forty-

fifth regiment, under the Honourable Lieutenant-colonel Mead, and the Eighth Porguese regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Douglass, in repulsing the last attempt of the enemy.

"Your lordship was pleased to mention me as directing the gallant charge of the Forty-fifth and Eighty-eighth regiments; but I can claim no merit whatever in the executive part of that brilliant exploit, which your lordship has so highly and so justly extolled. Lieutenant-colonel Wallace of the Eighty-eighth, and Major Gwynne, who commanded the four companies of the Forty-fifth engaged on that occasion, are entitled to the whole of the merit, and I am not disposed to deprive them of any part. I was actively engaged at the time in repelling the attack upon the post with which I was principally charged, though I provided, as far as the means I had at my disposal would allow, for the safety of every part of the position within my reach; and the moment I could with propriety and safety to the service quit the principal point of my command, I immediately proceeded to the post where my services were most necessary, and was at

all times to be found where his Majesty's service and my own honour required that I should be.'

'"I shall not say anything of the conduct of the troops under my command during the whole of the trying service of the day: it was beyond eulogy, and can receive no additional splendour from my feeble praise.

"With many apologies for troubling your lordship with such long details, in which I am necessarily so much concerned,

"I have the honour to be,

"With high respect,

"Your lordship's very faithful,

"Humble servant,

(Signed) "THOMAS PICTON."*

"To Lieutenant-general Lord Viscount Wellington,
"Commander of the Forces, &c. &c."

* The extraordinary report alluded to in this letter had its origin in the following singular and unlooked-for circumstance:—It has been before remarked, that previous to leaving England to join the army, General Picton made a promise to the Duke of Queensberry that he would write to him an account of the different occurrences which took place in the progress of the campaign. In accordance with this promise, a short time after the battle of Busacos, the general wrote to his grace a brief statement of the affair, confining his details almost entirely to the proceedings of

The clear and accurate description of the battle of Busacos contained in this letter, when

his own division, giving but a brief outline of the attack on the light division and the spirited manner in which General Crawfurd drove the enemy from the heights. The perusal of this letter gave the duke much satisfaction, and he read it over and over again to his friends; some one of whom, thinking that it would be equally interesting to the public, contrived by some means to obtain possession of it, and within a few days it was going the round of all the newspapers. Now it will readily be believed that the report contained in this letter was not intended for general perusal, but solely for those who felt an interest in General Picton, and wished for a detail of his own proceedings; and this was the whole which it was meant to convey. The effect produced upon the army, and especially upon General Picton, when the papers containing his letter were brought out, may easily be imagined.

General Crawfurd, with the officers and men of the light division, were annoyed at the little which was said about them; and the subject was discussed at some length in the army. Words cannot express the indignation of General Picton when he read his own letter in the public prints: he spoke of it as a most unjustifiable breach of confidence, but fully acquitted the duke of being a party to such a proceeding. The reader must remember, that, in writing this letter, he expressed that which was uppermost in his mind; while, being written only a few days subsequent to the battle, before he had an opportunity of being made fully acquainted with the proceedings on the left of the position, he was but ill able to give a detail of the engagement at that part of the line; and again, the army, and more especially his division, had ever since been in the field, checking the

assisted by the accompanying plan,* will convey an accurate idea of the conflict, and prove at once that the account given in the "History of the Peninsular War" is strikingly at variance with that contained in General Picton's report to the commander of the forces. The necessary inference to be drawn from these conflicting statements is, either that Colonel Napier must have been badly informed, and consequently published an erroneous statement; or that General Picton did not know the disposition of his men, in what manner they behaved, or to whose assistance he was indebt-

advance of the enemy, and covering the retreat. Still, coming from a general actively engaged in the field, this letter was looked upon by the people of England almost in the same light as the despatch; whereas it was only intended to describe that part of the battle in which General Picton and his division had been personally concerned, and of which he had been an eye-witness. The perusal of this letter gave rise to a variety of reports respecting General Picton, and the conduct of his division upon this occasion; some of these reached his ears, and in consequence he was induced to draw up the above detailed report for the satisfaction of the commander of the forces.

* This plan is engraved from the original sketch taken on the spot by the quartermaster-general referred to, and enclosed in General Picton's letter to Colonel Pleydel of the 3rd November 1810.

ed for extricating his division from its critical situation; or else, that knowing these particulars, he ventured to make a false representation of them to Lord Wellington. Which of these conclusions is the most probable, it is for the reader to determine. But should a doubt arise in the minds of any, we will point out more particularly a few of the errors in the description of the battle of Busacos, as related in the "History of the Peninsular War."

In the first place, it may be desirable to refer to an examination of the position of the British army on the heights of Busacos previous to the commencement of the attack.* It will there be seen that the corps of General Leith, called the fifth division, was on the right of Picton's third division; while Sir Brent Spencer, with the first, was on his left. Now General Picton in his report says, "There being an unoccupied space of considerably above a mile between my left and Sir Brent Spencer's division, I immediately after sunset (when it could not be observed by the enemy) detached Lieutenant-colonel Wallace, with the Eighty-eighth regiment, to take up an intermediate

* Vide Plan.

position, and communicate with the hill of Busacos and the main body of my division at the pass of Saint Antonio."

This shows, that long before the commencement of the attack, the Eighty-eighth regiment was more than half a mile on the left of the third division; while, in the next paragraph of the same document, he observes, "The troops in the immediate neighbourhood of the pass were visited by me on their respective posts before daybreak; and, immediately after, Colonel Mackinnon returned from visiting the Eighty-eighth regiment, and reported that the enemy was collecting in the ravine, opposite the position occupied by that regiment: in consequence of which I immediately detached Major Gwynne of the Forty-fifth regiment, with four companies, to reinforce that post."

It is there proved that this part of the Forty-fifth regiment was thus early sent to join the Eighty-eighth on the left of Picton's position. General Picton then commences an account of the attack upon the pass of Saint Antonio by "a heavy column" of the enemy; who, according to Colonel Napier, scaled the mountain so swiftly and with such astonishing power,

that they overthrew everything that opposed their progress. The gallant colonel then goes on to relate, that "the right of the third division was forced back, the Eighth Portuguese regiment was broken to pieces, and the hostile masses gained the highest part of the crest, just between the third and fifth divisions."

A more conflicting statement could hardly have been written than that contained in the following extract from General Picton's report, in which he describes the reception and success of this column of the enemy, which, he says, "compelled the advanced picquet of the division to fall back, and, pressing forward with great impetuosity, endeavoured to push up the road and force the pass. The light corps of the division, unable to resist such a superiority of numbers in front, was most judiciously thrown in upon the flank of the advancing column by Lieutenant-colonel Williams; and it was received with so steady and well-directed a fire by the Twenty-first Portuguese regiment of the line, and three companies of the Seventy-fourth regiment that moved up to their support on the left, that, after a long struggle, and repeated desperate attempts to

effect their object, (during which they suffered much from the well-directed fire of the Portuguese artillery, under Major Arentschild,) they were ultimately under the necessity of desisting, though a severe fire of cannon and musketry still continued."

The most astonishing part of Colonel Napier's statement, however, is contained in the concluding passage of the preceding extract from his work; where, after stating that "the hostile masses had gained the highest part of the crest, just between the third and fifth divisions," he continues, "the leading battalions immediately established themselves amongst the crowning rocks, and a confused mass wheeled to the right, intending to sweep the summit of the Sierra; but at that moment Lord Wellington caused two guns to open with grape upon their flank, a heavy musketry was still poured into their front, and in a little time the *Forty-fifth* and the *Eighty-eighth* regiments charged so furiously that even fresh men could not have withstood them."

The *Eighty-eighth* and four companies of the Forty-fifth regiments were at this moment defending themselves against an attack of the

enemy, more than half a mile on *the left* of General Picton's division! the *remainder of the Forty-fifth being in reserve;* how Colonel Napier could bring these regiments to charge on the *right* of the division is a mystery.

The colonel then observes, that "meanwhile the French, who had first gained the crest, had re-formed their ranks, with the right resting upon a precipice overhanging the reverse side of the Sierra. Thus the position was in fact gained, if any reserve had been at hand; for the greatest part of the third division, British and Portuguese, were fully engaged, and a misty cloud capped the summit, so that the enemy was ensconced amongst the rocks, and could not be seen except by General Leith. That officer had put his first brigade in motion to his own left as soon as he perceived the vigorous impression made on the third division, and he was now coming on rapidly; but he had two miles of rugged ground to pass in a narrow column before he could mingle in the fight. Keeping the Royals in reserve, he directed the Thirty-eighth to turn the right of the French; and as the precipice prevented this, Colonel Cameron of the Ninth, who

had been informed by a staff-officer of the critical state of affairs, formed his regiment in line under a heavy fire, and, without returning a single shot, ran in upon and drove the grenadiers from the rocks with irresistible bravery," &c. &c.

Now the ground of the whole of these proceedings is supposed to be on the right of the third division, near the pass of Saint Antonio; but if any further proof should be wanting to establish this fact, it is only necessary to remind the reader, that General Leith's corps was on the right of Picton's position; and as the Ninth regiment, which is stated to have driven back the enemy after they had forced the right of his position, belonged to that corps, these operations must have taken place on the right of the third division. The reader has already perused General Picton's report to the commander of the forces, wherein he gives a most detailed account of the enemy's attack and repulse on this part of his position; but so opposite is his statement to that given in the "History of the Peninsular War," that it will hardly be imagined to refer to the same point of the action. In fact, so convinced

was General Picton that the enemy were effectually repulsed in their attack upon the pass, and that he had nothing to apprehend on his right, that in his own words, which, although before inserted, are particularly applicable here, he actually quitted this part of his position, and proceeded to the left, where the attack was more warm. He says in the following paragraph to that last extracted—

"About this period the firing of musketry on the left appearing to increase and draw nearer, I directed Colonel Mackinnon to take the immediate command of the troops at the pass of Saint Antonio, and rode towards the left, with the assistant adjutant-general, Major Packenham; leaving my aid-de-camp, Captain Cuthbert, and the assistant quartermaster-general, Captain Anderdon, to bring up as fast as possible one battalion of the Eighth Portuguese regiment."

"On reaching the high rocky point about half-way between the pass of Saint Antonio and the hill of Busacos, I found the light companies of the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth regiments retiring in disorder, and the head of the enemy's column, already in pos-

session of the strong rocky point, deliberately firing down upon us, and the remainder of a large column pushing up the hill with great rapidity."

It will be observed, that the only point where the enemy did succeed in gaining any advantage was nearly a mile on the extreme left of the main body of the third division; and, consequently, for General Leith to have seen the enemy "ensconced amongst the rocks," from his position, he must have looked through the smoke arising from the firing at the pass; while for the Ninth regiment to have "driven them from the rocks with irresistible bravery," it must have passed with considerable expedition, either in front or rear of the main body of the third division: but this, even by Colonel Napier's own statement, they did not do; while, by General Picton's report, the enemy were repulsed by the troops of his own division. He continues, "Whilst endeavouring to rally the light infantry companies with the assistance of Major Packenham, I was joined by Major Smith of the Forty-fifth regiment, and we succeeded in forming them, under the immediate fire of the enemy,

not more than sixty yards distant. Major Smith most gallantly led them to the charge, and gained possession of the rock, driving the enemy before him; but, I am concerned to say, fell in the moment of victory, for which we were chiefly indebted to his animating example."

How different this to Colonel Napier's account! In fact, there is no similarity between the two, excepting that the position gained by the enemy was "a rocky point:" but the locality of that point is described as at least a mile from its real situation, it being far to the left of the third division, instead of immediately on its right, and much nearer relief from Sir Brent Spencer's division than the corps of General Leith; while, so far from the enemy having "no reserve" at hand, General Picton says, "that the remainder of a large column was pushing up the hill with great rapidity."

But a more important error in Colonel Napier's account occurs where he so distinctly describes the formation under fire, together with the gallant and successful charge

made upon the enemy by the Ninth regiment, under Colonel Cameron. Doubtless this officer would have led, and his regiment would have made, as brave and well-conducted an attack upon the enemy as that described by Colonel Napier—only it was not there: and as praise is due only where it has been earned, some degree of injustice is done to the memory of a gallant officer in thus giving to another that which is justly his. But another brief extract from the report will further convince the reader *who* drove the enemy from his rocky height, and forced him to abandon his momentary success. Immediately after the last extract General Picton observes:—

"The assistant quartermaster-general having fortunately brought up a battalion of the Eighth Portuguese regiment, commanded by Major Birmingham, at this critical period, I personally led and directed their attack on the flank of the enemy's column, and completely succeeded in driving them in great confusion and disorder down the hill and across the ravine."

Thus, then, it appears that it was Major

Smith, at the head of the light companies of the Eighty-eighth and Seventy-fourth regiments, who drove the enemy from the rocky point; and to his "animating example," General Picton says, "we were chiefly indebted for success." But General Picton's biographer may add more; praise is to him no longer flattery. Picton himself, at the head of a battalion of Portuguese, by his example assisted greatly the intrepid charge of the major, and together they drove the French at the point of the bayonet, first from the "rocky point," and then down the almost perpendicular steep. But the "History of the Peninsular War" is not only unjust to the leaders of this charge, but also to the officers and soldiers of the Forty-fifth, Seventy-fourth, and Eighty-eighth regiments. To them, and only to them, the merit of this contest is due. The light companies of the two latter, it is true, were compelled to retreat before the overwhelming numbers of the enemy; but they gallantly retrieved what they had lost, unassisted by any other force than one battalion of the Eighth Portuguese; the whole of which regiment, according to Colonel Napier's ac-

count,' was "broken to pieces" at the attack upon the pass. General Picton then continues:—

"Not being able to discover any enemy upon the ridge to my left, I immediately returned to the pass of Saint Antonio, where the firing of musketry and cannon still continued with little apparent abatement. On my arrival I learnt from Colonel Mackinnon, *that the enemy had not been able to make any impression during my absence;*"—proving at once that the right of the third division *was not* forced back at any time during the action; for the reader must be already convinced that no such reverse had taken place previously to General Picton visiting the position on his left, occupied by the Eighty-eighth and part of the Forty-fifth regiments.

It was not until the return of General Picton from the left of his position, when in fact the brunt of the action was over, that he had any communication with General Leith, as is evinced by the following remark contained in the consecutive passage of the report to that last quoted.

"At this moment Major-general Leith's

aid-de-camp came to report the arrival of that general and his division; upon which I rode from the pass of Saint Antonio to the road of communication,* and directed the leading regiment of the brigade to proceed without loss of time to the left, *as I had no occasion for assistance.* General Leith's brigade in consequence *marched on,* and arrived in time to join the five companies of the Forty-fifth regiment, under the Honourable Lieutenant-colonel Mead, and the Eighth Portuguese regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Douglass, in repulsing the *last attempt* of the enemy."

It thus appears, even by General Picton's report, that General Leith's division had a slight share in the conclusion of this battle; and upon a reference to the letter to Colonel Pleydel, dated the 3rd of November, it will be seen that he there mentions the First, Ninth, and Thirty-eighth regiments, as being those which came up to his support. Still they were not engaged on the right, or in concert with the main body of the third division, but were directed to march by the rear to the left of the

* Vide Plan of Busacos.

position. They did not, however, arrive at the point of attack until long after the enemy had been driven from the "rocky point" which they had succeeded in gaining, and were only engaged in repulsing the *last* feeble attempt made by the French before the close of the action.

It is evident, therefore, that the "History of the Peninsular War" has not done justice to either General Picton or his soldiers for the share which they took in the battle of Busacos; and it is strange that a writer who takes so much pains to be correct, and who had so many sources of information, should thus have fallen into so palpable an error with respect to the details of this conflict. The authorities whence this memoir has been compiled are beyond question authentic; and it is submitted that if General Picton did not know the operations and disposition of his division, it may with safety be asserted that they were not known at all: and without any disrespect to the commander of the forces himself, it is not too much to say, that even *he* would forego his opinion with regard to the operations of the different corps of a division if opposed to

the report of the general who at the time was in command.

But General Picton deserves unequivocal praise for his conduct in this affair. The foresight which he displayed in filling up the interval on his left, between the pass of Saint Antonio and the position occupied by Sir Brent Spencer, which he describes as considerably above a mile in extent, is highly characteristic of military genius. With admirable judgment he despatched, unobserved by the enemy, one of his strongest regiments to occupy this ground, conscious that a small force could defend the pass. The event proved how necessary was this precaution: it was the first point of attack, and by far the most serious. The bravery of the troops and the presence of their general alone obtained for them victory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Operations of the allied army.—Massena's movements.—Scene of horror and confusion.—Retrogade movement of the allies.—Position within the Lines of Torres Vedras.—Plan and defence of those lines.—Disposition of the several allied corps.—Excesses of Massena's troops.—Lord Wellington's masterly plans.—Massena's critical situation.—Pursuits and occupations of the allies.—General Picton's rebuke of his men.

It is time now to follow the operations of the army after they had thus successfully checked the progress of the enemy. The letter of General Picton dated the 3rd of November has already given a brief outline of the movements of the allies subsequent to the battle of Busacos. It was fully expected that Massena would make a further attempt on the following morning to force a passage over this mountain ridge, and every preparation was accordingly made in the British line to give him as warm a reception as he had experienced on the pre-

vious day. The French general had, however, learned his lesson; the result of the conflict on the heights had taught him to reflect that there might be a better if not a shorter route to Coimbra than over precipices defended by a determined and well-disciplined enemy.

Acting upon this conclusion, Massena merely occupied the attention of the British during the day with some light infantry movements, and at night put his army in motion to execute what he should have done at first, instead of attacking the heights of Busacos. This was to turn the left of the British position, by marching his army through a mountain-pass in the Sierra Caramula; a ridge which runs at an obtuse angle with that of Busacos, and upon which the right flank of the French had rested. This pass led into the high road to Coimbra; and, by a rapid movement, Massena hoped to reach that place before the British could succeed in effecting their retreat. Lord Wellington, in consequence, put his army in motion in three columns at two o'clock in the morning of the 29th of September, and in the evening took up a position with the apparent intention of defending Coimbra: but

it does not appear that this was any part of Lord Wellington's actual plan: for General Picton observes, "Coimbra at this season, when the river Mondego is everywhere fordable, has no advantages as a defensive position." The British commander, in fact, had no other object in making this demonstration than to enable the inhabitants of the city to effect their retreat in front of his army, while he retarded the advance of the French through the narrow paths by which they must necessarily pass.

On the 1st of October, the enemy attacked the position occupied by the allies, driving in the outposts: a retreat was immediately ordered; and the army, with all expedition and some skirmishing, crossed the Mondego at Coimbra. This movement was full of danger, as the narrow passes through which the army and retreating inhabitants had to defile admitted but of a narrow front. The Junta had, at the instigation of Lord Wellington, issued a mandate, calling upon all the inhabitants of the provinces in the neighbourhood of Lisbon to fall behind the lines of Torres Vedras, to drive in their cattle, and bring with them their stores of corn and provisions, and whatever else they

wished to preserve from the hands of the invaders. This order was, however, but imperfectly obeyed; for, while the enemy was at a distance, and the British army between them, the inhabitants thought there was plenty of time; and not until they found the French in their cities, and plundering their houses, did they discover that they had neglected the opportunity of complying with the wise injunctions of their Government. So, at Coimbra, the rapid advance of the enemy and the sudden retreat of the allies left but little time for preparation; and, in consequence, a scene of horror and confusion ensued which can hardly be conceived.

Lord Londonderry says, "A crowd of men, women, and children,—of the sick, the aged, and the infirm, as well as the robust and the young, covered the roads and fields in every direction. Mothers might be seen, with infants at their breasts, hurrying towards the capital and weeping as they went; old men, scarcely able to totter along, made way chiefly by the aid of their sons and daughters; whilst the whole way-side soon became strewed with bedding, blankets, and other species of house-

hold furniture, which the weary fugitives were unable to carry farther.

When the British troops fell back upon Coimbra, all was confusion. When they passed through the city and over the bridge, the whole population would have fled with them; they then, however, felt how ill-judged was their delay: the road was choked with soldiers and guns, and the inhabitants were compelled to give way, force even being employed for the purpose of securing a passage for the army; and the wretched inhabitants ceased to remember their folly amidst their more immediate misery. Little could be done to alleviate their sufferings or assist their flight; they had neglected employing the means when in their power, and they were now left by thousands to witness the pillage of their homes and the destruction of their city. The French showed but little mercy: plunder was their object, and they hated the Portuguese with as much rancour as that nation hated them.

This retrograde movement of the allies was one of choice, not necessity; and it had a peculiarity in being the retreat of a victorious army. But Lord Wellington did not wish to hazard

another engagement with the enemy; his plans were more extensive, and his efforts were all directed to reduce the result to a certainty. To effect this he took up a position within the first grand line of Torres Vedras: here it was that he staked his military reputation; this was the spot which he had chosen to convince the enemy that, although retreating, he was not defeated. But it was not only the French army that he had to check: that powerful opponent public opinion was now to be arrested; the current of defeat was to be turned; in short, by this measure, the result of mature judgment, he hoped not only to destroy the power of the French in the Peninsula, but at the same time to secure the confidence of his army and the British nation. Without these, he could not expect to obtain success; with them, he might obtain anything.

These celebrated military lines of defence, the formation of which entitle their distinguished projector to as much or more fame than any of the many victories which he gained, have already been fully described; and we are here only called upon to repeat General Picton's opinion of their capability, as expressed in his

letter to Colonel Pleydel of the 3rd of November; wherein he remarks, that the position is "too extensive to be strong;" and then adds, "There is great difficulty in communicating between the different posts, on account of the extreme badness of the roads at this season of the year." These objections were doubtless reasonable and just; but it would be presumptuous at this period to hazard any observations in support of General Picton's remarks, as they could at once be met by the ready reply of success. A brief outline of the position of the contending armies and their resources shall therefore fill up the interval during which Lord Wellington locked up his army within the lines of Torres Vedras.

The following short extract from the interesting work of the Marquis of Londonderry will convey a ready idea to the reader of the plan and defence of these lines.

"Along the neck of the Peninsula, at the extremity of which Lisbon is built, there extend several ranges of high and rugged hills, intersected here and there by narrow passes, and covered for the most part by deep ravines and defiles, in the usual acceptation of the

term, impassable. Along these, at the distance of perhaps twenty-five English miles from the city, Lord Wellington had selected two lines, one considerably in advance of the other, but both of tremendous strength; and he had bestowed upon their fortification so much of care, diligence, and science, as to place them almost equally beyond the reach of insult from any assailing force, however numerous and well supplied. The system pursued on this occasion was quite novel, and the works erected such as were not to be met with under similar circumstances in any part of the world."

In reference to the first line of this position, which was now occupied by the allied powers, he observes: "This line rested its right upon the acclivities of Alhandra, on the summit of which several formidable redoubts were erected, and was flanked by the fire of a dozen gun-boats at anchor in the Tagus. The faces of these hills were all carefully scarped, the road which led through them was destroyed, and it was with perfect justice concluded, that here, at least, our position might be pronounced impregnable;—on the left of these heights, by a ravine or gully, called the Pass of Mal-

tao, the gorge of which was effectually blocked up by two formidable redoubts; whilst it was completely commanded on one hand by the hills of Alhandra, and on the other by those of Armeda. The latter, like the former, were scarped, and otherwise rendered inaccessible; and they communicated with the centre of the position, which was a high mountain, crowned by a redoubt more extensive than any other in the line. As this mountain overhung the village of Sobral, its castle kept completely at command the great road which conducts from thence to Lisbon, and rendered it utterly hopeless for any body of men so much as to attempt a passage in that direction. On the left of this redoubt, again, some high and broken ground looked down upon Zebreira, and stretched in formidable shape towards Pantaneira. Just behind that village there is a deep glen, succeeded by other hills which cover the roads from Ribaldiera to Exara de los Cavalleiros and Lisbon; whilst on the left of the whole was a lofty mountain, which crowded up all the space between these roads and Torres Vedras.

"Such," continues the marquis, "is a brief

detail of the leading features in this position; than which it will be seen that, independently of all that art had done for it, few can be imagined more formidable. But when it is further understood, that the ascents were all steep, rugged, and rocky; that strong vineyards and deep ground everywhere covered the front, and that wherever natural obstacles chanced to be fewer in number or less insuperable in kind than could have been desired, labour had not failed to supply them; and when these things are taken into consideration, an army once brought thither must either be false to itself, or it might defy all the force of the French empire seriously to molest it."

The reader being thus made acquainted with the position of the army, it may now be desirable to show the disposition of the several corps. On the extreme right, with its right flank resting on the Tagus, were posted the forces of General Hill. The next on his left was Crawfurd, with his division, the particular duties of which were to guard the heights of Arruda. General Pack's Portuguese brigade followed, occupying the great redoubt

before alluded to as overlooking the village and castle of Sobral.

The high ground above Zebreira was held by Sir Brent Spencer's first division, which was connected on its left with the right of Picton's division, which had to defend the ground from the village of Pantaneira, across a kind of ravine, until it joined the fourth division, under General Cole, by which the line of defence was continued across a succession of hills as far as the road leading to Exara de los Cavalleiros and Lisbon, where the corps of General Campbell occupied the extreme left of the British line at Torres Vedras.

The troops under Lord Wellington's command, and with which he had to defend this position, which extended about twenty-nine miles, amounted, according to General Picton's statement, to about seventy thousand men; but of these only thirty-five thousand were British; and this estimate was, as he observes, drawn from the "eating numbers," the amount of bayonets not exceeding eight-and-twenty thousand. The remainder of the seventy thousand was composed of Portuguese and Spaniards: the latter General Picton styles "a mise-

rable mob;" while the former were hardly yet to be fully depended upon for acting when unsupported by British troops. Still, as they were led, and in some instances officered, by English, it was hoped that they would not disgrace their allies.

The disposable force under the command of Massena in front of the lines was about seventy thousand veteran soldiers; but the relative situations of the two armies was strikingly different. The French had Spain and the greater part of Portugal between them and France; their excesses had destroyed every favourable feeling which might have existed in the minds of the inhabitants of the Peninsula towards them; every means were therefore employed to destroy and harass them. The marauding and destructive spirit which prevailed, and which was in fact encouraged, in the French army, soon devastated the country occupied by their soldiers, and destroyed their resources. The decree of the Junta had been but imperfectly obeyed, and for a time their foraging parties contrived to collect together a miserable maintenance; but a thoughtless and wasteful expenditure soon exhausted the im-

mediate neighbourhood, when they were compelled to extend their depredations to a more enlarged circle. Then it was that the independent corps of both Spaniards and Portuguese, many of whom were instigated by bitter hatred, sought revenge for some desolated home or murdered relative. Those active but irregular forces, taking advantage of the unsupported detachments, constantly surprised and attacked them in their expeditions, and destroyed them with as little mercy as they had shown to others.

These occurrences at length became so frequent, that the parties sent out by the French more resembled small armies than detachments; while it frequently happened that they could only succeed in obtaining sufficient for their own support, their unfortunate companions being left without resources. An occasional supply would sometimes arrive, sent from Madrid by King Joseph; but for ten that were sent, not more than three reached their destination. No reliance, therefore, could be placed upon their arrival. The numerous mountain-passes through which they had to travel gave the active and untiring Guerilla bands every

advantage in their attacks upon the escort; and although occasionally they were successful in getting forward their charge, the contests in every succeeding defile reduced their numbers, until at length, the love of self-preservation superseding every other consideration, they abandoned the waggons, and endeavoured by flight to gain the army. But few even by this sacrifice contrived to escape the hostile Spaniards, and they were hunted and shot with the same savage pleasure as if they had been wild beasts.

Far different was the situation of the allies at that period, as, from their Alpine line, they looked down upon the host beneath. In conscious security, they could watch their movements and defy their attacks; while, with Lisbon in their rear, and the English fleet riding triumphantly in the Tagus, they were abundantly supplied with provisions. England, with her ample resources, was sending constantly her fleets of merchant-ships full of corn, ammunition, and in fact everything that could be desired for the maintenance and support of the army. In case of being driven from this their first position, they had another, and even a

stronger, upon which they could fall back without confusion; while, supposing all should fail, this same fleet was prepared to receive them. The allies had nothing, therefore, to do but await the retreat and probable destruction of their enemies; for it was certain that the French army could not remain long in its present position.

Lord Wellington had induced the French general to attempt the conquest of Portugal in order to destroy his army. Massena had not discovered the plans of his opponent until too late to retract from his fatal advance; and he found himself in one moment stopped, when he was in full expectation of driving the English into the sea, and taking quiet possession of Lisbon. He had now a choice of three ways of attempting to extricate himself, but none of these presented a very flattering prospect of success: one was, to force the lines of Torres Vedras, and, by securing Lisbon, obtain for his soldiers those supplies of which he stood so greatly in need; another, to fall back without delay to the frontiers of Spain, until France could send him some assistance by increasing his force, and securing the passage

of provisions for their maintenance; the last was, to make a flank movement, and, by passing the Tagus, form a junction with the army of Andalusia.

Posterity will doubtless give to Lord Wellington as much credit for his masterly plans, and the manner in which he made the French general unconsciously subservient to them, previous to taking up this position, as for any other acts of his life. Lord Wellington led on Massena with the constant shadow of victory; for it must be acknowledged that the British army was retreating. From Ciudad Rodrigo, from Almeida, from Busacos, it had successively retired, and "the Leopard was about to be driven into the sea." But at Torres Vedras the delusion was dispelled.

The plot was then ripe. Lord Wellington had lured his pursuer into the snare he had so long been preparing; at this spot his career of success was arrested; here he wasted his resources and his strength; here he discovered the error into which he had been betrayed, when, disappointed and discouraged by the formidable barrier before him, and ashamed to retreat, he remained in a state of mere inactivity.

General Picton, even as early as the beginning of November, observed, "He is apparently waiting for reinforcements, very badly off for provisions, with his communication wholly cut off. His situation is every day becoming more and more critical, and his difficulty of procuring subsistence for his army must be daily increasing. If a considerable army is not despatched in time to his assistance, little less than a miracle can save him from ruin." Thus, then, Lord Wellington, from as bad, or even a worse situation than that of Sir John Moore, contrived to draw success, to stop the tide of French conquests, and, with an army which at first was laughed at for its insignificance, to hold at defiance an enemy flushed with conquest, and in numbers almost double that of the allies. General Picton gave a strong proof of his penetration, when, in the early period of Lord Wellington's career, before he had had an opportunity of evincing the vast original resources of his mind, he observed,—"I think it was not possible to have made choice of a person possessing more essential qualities for so important and difficult a command."

A few movements in front kept our soldiers on the alert. Massena made several demonstrations to change the line of attack by uniting his army to that of Regnier, and endeavouring to force the right extremity of the British position where it rested on the Tagus. The ground occupied by General Picton and his division was of too important a nature to admit of its being for a moment left unprotected, and in consequence no change took place in their position; but many alterations were made in the situation of the other corps; and Crawfurd with his light division was more than once partially engaged with the enemy, and upon one occasion, had it not been for the opportune arrival of Lord Wellington, it is more than probable that he would again have involved the security of his division, if not of the whole army.

The pursuits and occupations of the allies cannot be better expressed than in the language of the Marquis of Londonderry: "Neither the time of our soldiers," observes the gallant Marquis in his Narrative, "nor that of their chief, was, however, wasted in idleness. The former were busily employed in the con-

struction of new works wherever their erection appeared at all desirable, and in giving additional solidity to those already thrown up, till the lines became as perfect a specimen of a fortified position as it was possible for nature and art to produce. The latter was indefatigable in his exertions to bring his army into a condition of general efficiency, and his efforts were too judiciously applied not to be crowned with success. The Portuguese being now thoroughly amalgamated with the British troops, learned from them all those lessons which in after campaigns they turned to an excellent account; and Beresford, to whom the entire merit of their first training is due, was in consequence removed from all farther responsibility in field operations. Every day brought in its improvements among them; and the general was soon rewarded for all his trouble by the conviction that he might rely upon them almost as perfectly as upon his countrymen. Nor was Lord Wellington inattentive to the comforts and even luxuries of his followers. Provisions were abundant; there was no want of wine; and sports and amusements went on as if we had been, not at the seat of war, but in England.

Officers of all ranks and every department, from the commander-in-chief down to the regimental subaltern, occasionally enjoyed the field sports of hunting, shooting, and fishing: the men, too, had their pastimes when not employed on duty;—in a word, seldom had an army, occupying ground in the face of an enemy, enjoyed so many hours of relaxation, or contrived to unite so completely the pleasures of country life with the serious business of war. It is probably needless to add, that so great a show of security in their leader had the best possible effect upon the temper of the troops; or that the *morale* of the army was sustained, not more by a contemplation of things as they really were, than by a conviction that they must be going on prosperously, otherwise so much relaxation could not abound."

Another writer, in relating the *amusements* of the officers and men at this period, after describing the pillage of a wine-store by some of Picton's division, and the consequent intoxication of the men, adds, "The first Sunday after the outrage already related, when the chaplain left his station, General Picton took his place,

not to pray, but to give us a sermon. This was the first time he had addressed us. I felt anxious to examine the features of a man who had been so much the public talk on account of his reputed cruelty at Trinidad. I could not deny that I felt a prejudice against him, and his countenance did not do it away; for it had a stern and gloomy expression, which, added to a very dark complexion, made it no way prepossessing: but when he opened his mouth, and began to pour forth a torrent of abuse on us for our conduct, and his dark eye flashed with indignation, as he recapitulated our errors,

'Hope withering fled, and Mercy sigh'd farewell.'

* * * * * *

"But General Picton was not the character which we by prejudice were led to think him. Convinced of the baneful effects of allowing his men to plunder, he set his face sternly against it, but in other respects he was indulgent; and although no man could blame with more severity when occasion required, he was no niggard of his praise when it was deserved.

Nothing could surpass his calm intrepidity and bravery in danger; and his presence in battle had the effect of a talisman, so much had his skill and valour gained upon the men under his command."

CHAPTER XIX.

Retreat of the French Army. — General Picton's account of the advance of the Allied forces. — General Picton's accuracy proved by the statements of the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis of Londonderry, and Colonel Napier. — Indefatigable exertions of General Picton.—The "Fighting Division."—Depredations of the Enemy.—Discontent among Massena's Generals.

It was not until the commencement of the year 1811 that the allied army was again called into active operations. Massena, despairing of sufficient reinforcements to enable him to advance, and having no certain means of communicating with Napoleon, by which he could represent to him the actual state of his army and the total exhaustion of all his resources, resolved upon that step which, had he taken some few months earlier, might have placed the allied army at this period in a strikingly different situation to that which it now held. He resolved to retreat; but it was now an act of

necessity: his army was reduced, disheartened, and disaffected, and he was now obliged to fly before the same enemy whom he had at the close of the preceding year driven before him into the lines of Torres Vedras. Disease had made sad havoc amongst the French troops, and desertions had been frequent; in short, every accumulated misery of a besieged city was endured by this victorious and blockading army.

Massena was unwilling to betray his intention to the British general until he had got his sick and baggage in advance of his march, and he even showed some demonstrations of commencing active operations against the lines; but it soon became apparent that the only preparations which the enemy had been making were to deceive the allies, that they might retreat as far as possible before their intentions were made known. The correspondence of General Picton, who was now again called into action, and who had a fresh opportunity of showing the activity of his disposition, and that military genius which so strongly marked his character, contains a description of this retreat, and the part which his division took in harassing the enemy. He

wrote the particulars contained in the following letter to Colonel Pleydel; and the accuracy of his details cannot be more fully exemplified than by comparing them with the remarks of more modern and elaborate writers.

" Philadoze, fifty miles in advance of Coimbra, 24th March 1811; and Guarda, 29th.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" It having been satisfactorily ascertained that the enemy was in general movement towards the rear on the 4th or 5th of March, the different divisions of this army were ordered to march on the 6th. The route of this division for five days was extremely laborious, running over excessively steep and rocky mountains, scarcely affording the trace of roads. On the 11th, after a march of above twenty miles, we came up with the rear-guard of the enemy, strongly posted near the town of Pombal; and the third division was ordered to make a movement to the left, to co-operate in a general attack upon the rear-guard: but the fourth division being delayed longer than was calculated, by the badness and narrowness of the roads, it was not carried into execution.

and the enemy decamped during the night, leaving merely a few of their light troops to keep their fires up until morning.

"On the 12th the army moved in pursuit of the enemy at six o'clock, this division supporting the advance-guard. After a march of between five and six miles, we came up with them, strongly posted on a commanding ridge, with an extensive declivity in front, their right resting upon a woody mountain of difficult access, and their left secured by the village of Redinha and an impassable river. The third division was ordered to march to the right, through difficult woods, to attack the left of the enemy's position; whilst the fourth division, under the Honourable Major-general Cole, supported by the first, under Lieutenant-general Sir Brent Spencer, made the attack in front. After a well-supported though distant fire of about twenty minutes, the enemy gave way at all points, and retreated across the river by a bridge with which, unfortunately, we were not acquainted. I attempted to push the Honourable Major-general Colville's brigade over the river, to cut them off; but the attempt failed, as it proved too

deep and rapid to be forded. The enemy retreated about three miles to a strong woody ridge, where they showed a disposition to make another stand; but the third division being pushed along the mountains on their left, so as to threaten their rear and their communication with the main body of their army at Condeixa, they abandoned it the same evening, and took up a fresh position near the town of Condeixa, which is covered by an extremely difficult river.

"On the 13th the third division made a forced march over a tract of difficult rocky mountains, to make a demonstration in the rear of the enemy's left flank; which had the desired effect, as they immediately abandoned the position with considerable precipitation, and fell back several miles. The division crossed the river at an extremely difficult pass the same evening, and took up a position within a mile of the enemy's rear-posts.

"On the following morning (the 14th) the light division was engaged with the enemy's rear-guard as early as half-past five, and it was a continual skirmish without any intermission until near four o'clock in the evening. The

light troops of the third division harassed the enemy's left during the whole of the day; and the body of the division made such successive demonstrations in their rear, as to deter them from attempting anything like a serious stand in any of the positions they took up during the course of the day. The fog was so very thick on the morning of the 15th, that we did not commence our march until nine o'clock, and it was nearly three o'clock in the evening before we came in contact with their rear; which was immediately attacked on the right by the light division under Major-general Sir William Erskine, supported by the sixth division, and on the centre and left by the third division, supported by the first division under Lieutenant-general Sir Brent Spencer. The ground was particularly favourable to the enemy; being abrupt woody heights, connected by narrow gorges, which were strongly occupied by infantry and artillery. The division in consequence experienced an obstinate resistance; but in the end we successively drove them from all the points they occupied, but were prevented from taking advantage of their disorder by the approach of night.

"The following day (the 16th) was employed in reconnoitring the position where the enemy had concentrated the whole of his force, about fifty thousand, upon a strong woody ridge, covered by a rapid rocky river, nowhere fordable, in his front. He decamped early on the following night, and by a forced march reached the river Alva, which he passed at different practicable fords on the 17th and 18th, in the morning. We were under the necessity of relaxing in our pursuit through a total deficiency of provisions, the convoys of which could not keep pace with the rapidity of our movements, and the country through which we advanced affording no one article of human subsistence, the enemy having destroyed everything with fire and sword. We, however, followed the route of the enemy by easy marches until the 29th, when, by a combination of movements, we succeeded in dislodging him from the position he had taken up upon the heights of Guarda, the strongest and most defensible ground I ever recollect to have seen in any country. The most important part of this day's business fell to the share of the third division, and we

fully succeeded in turning the left of the enemy's position, and taking a strong position in his rear, within a quarter of a mile of his head-quarters; which so alarmed him, that he immediately withdrew the corps which were opposed to the other divisions, and commenced his retreat with great marks of precipitation.

"Massena himself, with full twenty thousand men, was on the heights and in the city of Guarda when I made my appearance at nine o'clock in the morning, with three British and two Portuguese regiments. This famous general certainly showed little determination or talent on the occasion: with his great superiority of force, he should immediately have attacked me, notwithstanding the excellence of my position, which, independent of its strength, had a most commanding appearance; but he allowed me to remain within four hundred yards of his main body, threatening his rear, for above two hours before the other columns made their appearance; but of course their movements alarming him, at the same time decided him not to hazard an attack, the failure of which would probably have brought on the total discomfiture of his army. This was wholly a

day of manœuvring, and did not cost us a single man. If the light division and cavalry had been able to cross the country, it would probably have been a decisive day; but the difficulty of the country and the badness of the roads rendered it impracticable. We have, however, driven them out of Portugal for the present; and their army is so perfectly disorganised in respect to every kind of military equipment, that it will require considerable time to reform it for active service. With about thirty-five thousand men we have been pursuing an army of sixty thousand, and of course Lord Wellington has been extremely cautious not to undertake anything which might eventually lead to a general action.

"The enemy's rear-guard, during the whole course of the retreat, was commanded by Marshal Ney in person; and all his movements afforded a perfect lesson in that kind of warfare. Moving at all times upon his flank, I had an opportunity of seeing everything he did; and I must be dull in the extreme if I have not derived some practically useful knowledge from such an example. Nothing can exceed the devastation and cruelties committed by the

enemy during the whole course of his retreat; setting fire to all the villages and murdering all the peasantry for leagues on each flank of his columns. Their atrocities have been such and so numerous, that the name of a Frenchman must be execrated here for ages.

"I shall write to the general by this occasion. My friend General Este writes to me, that he continues to enjoy his usual health and spirits, and had got so far over the winter, as far as February, without any indisposition. I hope you have escaped equally well: my health has been excellent. I fear you will have great difficulty in deciphering my miserable scrawl, which is rendered more so by the badness of the paper.

"With my best wishes,

"My dear Sir,

"Very faithfully yours,

"THOMAS PICTON."

We are unwilling to forego this opportunity of showing the extraordinary precision and accuracy with which General Picton remembered and described the dates, operations, and successes of the allied armies: a compa-

rison with those writers who have had every facility for obtaining correct information, and whose pages have had the advantage of criticism and correction, will be a gratifying proof that implicit reliance may be placed upon the statements of General Picton, notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances under which they may have been written.

General Picton's account of the advance of the allied army is thus confirmed by the commander of the forces, who, in his despatch dated Villa Seca, March 14th, 1811, observes:—

"I could not collect a sufficient body of troops to commence any operations upon the enemy till the 11th. On that day, the first, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, and the light divisions of infantry, and General Pack's brigade, and all the British cavalry, joined upon the ground immediately in front of the enemy, who had commenced their retreat from their position during the night. They were followed by the light division, the Hussars and Royals, and Brigadier-general Pack's brigade, under the command of Major-general Slade, and made an attempt to hold the ancient

castle of Pombal, from which they were driven; but the sixth corps, and General Montbrun's cavalry, which formed the rear-guard, supported by the eighth corps, held the ground on the other side of the town; the troops not having arrived in time to complete the dispositions to attack them before it was dark."

* * * * * *

"The enemy retired in the night."

While the Marquis of Londonderry, in his Narrative, adds: "On the 11th, dispositions were made for bringing the enemy to action, by the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and light divisions, assembled for the purpose: but Massena, instead of waiting to be assailed, broke up during the night."

Colonel Napier, in reference to this demonstration of attack, mentions it as having taken place on the 10th; but as the three statements here given agree in representing it to have happened on the 11th, it is only reasonable to suppose that he is in this instance mistaken.

General Picton's statement relative to the attack of the enemy's position near the village of Redinha is borne out as follows:

Lord Wellington, in his despatch, says, in allusion to this affair :—

"On the 12th, the sixth corps, with General Montbrun's cavalry, took up a strong position at the end of a defile between Redinha and Pombal, with their right in a wood upon the Soure river, and their left extending towards the high ground above the river of Redinha : this town was in their rear. I attacked them in this position on the 12th, with the third and fourth light divisions of infantry, and Brigadier-general Pack's brigade and the cavalry; the other troops being in reserve. The post in the wood upon their right was first forced by Sir William Erskine with the light division; we were then able to form the troops in the plain beyond the defile; and the third division, under Major-general Picton, was formed in two lines in the skirts of the wood upon the right; the fourth division, under Major-general Cole, in two lines in the centre, having General Pack's brigade supporting their right, and communicating with the third division and the light division in two lines on their left. These troops were supported in the rear by the British cavalry; and the

first, fifth, and sixth divisions were in reserve. The troops were formed with great accuracy and celerity."

* * * * * *

"There was but one narrow bridge, and a ford close to it, over the Redinha river, over which our light troops passed with the enemy; but as the enemy commanded these passages with cannon, some time elapsed before we could pass over a sufficient body of troops to make a fresh disposition to attack the heights on which they had again taken post. The third division crossed, however, and manœuvred again upon the enemy's left flank; while the light infantry and cavalry, supported by the light division, drove them upon their main body at Condeixa. The light infantry of Major-general Picton's division under Lieutenant-colonel Williams, and Fourth Caçadores under Colonel de Regoa, were principally concerned in this operation."

The movements connected with the enemy's retreat, as detailed by General Picton, are related in the same way by the Marquis of Londonderry. "On the 12th," observes his lordship, "a strong rear-guard was seen posted at

the end of a defile in front of the village (Redinha). It was immediately attacked by three divisions of infantry, by General Pack's Portuguese brigade and the cavalry, and, after an obstinate resistance, was driven through the defile to the plain beyond. It next retreated to some high and broken ground, where it again showed a front; but from this position it was also compelled to retire with some loss; and finally it withdrew to Condeixa, where the main body had established itself."

Colonel Napier's description is too detailed for entire extract: after alluding to the light division, then under Sir William Erskine, "being formed in such a manner that it outflanked the French right," he observes, "Picton seized the wooded heights protecting the French left; thus Ney's position was left bare."

In reference to the manœuvres of the 13th, the same uniformity of statement will be observed in the correspondence of General Picton; and from this confirmation of his clearness, and the accuracy of his details, which it is now our object to prove by comparison, we may in future claim for him, when relating facts pe-

culiarly within his own knowledge, a reliance which cannot be shaken by any contemporary narrator.

Lord Wellington, in his despatch, observes: "We found the whole army yesterday, with the exception of the second corps, which was still at Espinhel, in a very strong position at Condeixa.'

* * * * * *

"I therefore marched the third division, under Major-general Picton, through the mountains upon the enemy's left, towards the only road open for their reception; which had the immediate effect of dislodging them from the strong position of Condeixa."

Colonel Napier, in allusion to the position held by the French at Condeixa, observes, in confirmation of General Picton's remark on that head: "For some time all appeared quiet in the French lines. Massena, in repairing to Fonte Coberta, had left Ney orders, it is said, to set fire to Condeixa at a certain hour, when all the divisions were simultaneously to concentrate at Casal Nova, in a second position, perpendicular to the first, and covering the road to Puente Murcella. Towards three o'clock, however, Picton was descried winding round the bluff

end of a mountain, about eight miles distant; and as he was already beyond the French left, instant confusion pervaded their camp: a thick smoke arose from Condeixa; the columns were seen hurrying towards Casal Nova, and the British immediately pushed forward."

The marquis in his Narrative, referring to the same affair, says: "The third division, under General Picton, made a long and tedious *detour* to the right; but it succeeded in throwing itself upon the left of the enemy's line, which instantly broke into column of march and fell back."

Alluding to the attack by the light division, described in General Picton's letter, Colonel Napier remarks: "The enemy's ground was so extensive, and his skirmishers so thick and so easily supported, that in a little time the division was necessarily stretched out in one thin thread, and closely engaged in every part, without any reserve; nor could it even thus present an equal front, until Picton sent the riflemen of the Sixtieth to prolong the line. Nevertheless, the fight was vigorously maintained amidst the numerous stone enclosures on the mountain side; some advantages were even gained, and

the right of the enemy was partially turned; yet the main position could not be shaken, until Picton near, and Cole further off, had turned it by the left."

The accuracy of General Picton's description of the attack on the rear of the enemy on the 15th, is proved by Lord Wellington, in his despatch dated Louzao, March 16th, 1811, who observes: "We found the enemy's whole army yesterday in a very strong position on the Ceira, having one corps as an advanced guard in front of Foz de Aronce, on this side the river. I immediately made arrangements to drive in the advanced guard," &c.

* * * * * *

"The light division, under Major-general Sir William Erskine, was ordered to possess some heights immediately above Foz de Aronce, while Major-general Picton's division was moved along the great road to attack the left of the enemy's position and of the village. The sixth division, under Major-general Campbell, and the Hussars and Sixteenth light dragoons, supported the light division; and the first division and the Fourteenth and Royal Dragoons, the third."

In the "Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns," it is stated that—"On the following morning (the 15th) a thick fog retarded the march of the allies for several hours. About nine the day cleared up; and the troops, renewing the pursuit, passed through the smoking ruins of Miranda de Corvo. The French army were found in a strong position on the Ceira, a tributary of the Mondego, with one corps at Foz de Aronce, on the left of the river. Lord Wellington immediately directed movements on the flanks of this corps, and attacked it briskly in front. By these measures it was driven rapidly back on the bridge in great confusion."

It is extraordinary how General Picton could obtain such accurate details of the proceedings of the other divisions, while he was himself, during nearly the whole of this retreat, on the extreme left of the allied army. Yet, allowing for the various modes of expression General Picton's statements are corroborated by all those writers who have subsequently compiled their narratives of the war. It must be remembered that the letter from which these passages have been extracted was written

actually during the advance of the allies in pursuit of the retreating French; while, from the position of Picton, he had not even the advantage of communicating with the other officers of division.

Those who had an opportunity of observing the conduct of General Picton at this period speak of him in terms which, if inserted here, would be considered rather the language of friendship than that of truth. One who served with him in almost every field declares that no pen could do justice to the merits and indefatigable exertions of Sir Thomas Picton during this pursuit of the French army. Long before the break of day he was awake, and preparing his division for an advance so soon as there was sufficient light to direct their footsteps. Constantly at their head, encouraging where they faltered, and directing them where they were at a loss, he might be seen by every man in his division. The waverer was shamed into fresh efforts, while the courageous but exhausted soldier was cheered and encouraged by the example of his leader. The mountain steeps and broken unknown paths were traversed with extraordinary rapidity, him-

self pointing the way and leading them on, until he suddenly surprised the enemy by emerging from the mist at those points where of all others they least expected an attack.

These unexpected and daring movements prevented many a bloody struggle, by daunting the enemy and compelling him to retreat in order to save his flank from being turned. The merit of planning these evolutions is doubtless in many instances to be attributed to the distinguished chief of the British army, but the merit of their execution is due alone to Picton. After receiving his orders for the general line of operations, the rest was left to his judgment and his skill; all the active duty consequently devolved upon him; and even at this period Lord Wellington showed the estimation in which he held him, by keeping his division constantly in the advance, when, by traversing the most dangerous and difficult paths, or by outflanking the position of the enemy, many an easy conquest was gained where it might have been anticipated the enemy would make a determined stand.

This division had already obtained for itself a name which it bore all through the

campaign, and the "fighting division" soon became the most conspicuous in the whole army for its daring enterprise and indefatigable activity. It was not, however, its numbers that made it formidable to the enemy or distinguished in the allied army; it was the spirit of its soldiers and the heroic example of its leader. There were many older officers in the army at this period both as to years and experience; for it must not be forgotten that General Picton had never seen a field of battle before he took the command of the third division of the army of the Peninsula; his early career had therefore been unmarked by any train of services likely to give him military knowledge or reputation. It has already been shown that many years of his life had been passed in all the inactivity of garrison duties in time of peace, many more in the retirement of private life, and a considerable period in the civil capacity of Governor of Trinidad: it will therefore be a natural inquiry how General Picton had been enabled to qualify himself for the important duties which he had now to perform. He had been in the field but one year at the period of this retreat; yet he distin-

guished himself above those whose whole lives had been passed in the camp, who had gone through every grade in the school of war, but who now only lived and acted as well-drilled soldiers,—obedient and brave. Not so Picton: his whole soul was absorbed in the manœuvres of the two armies; he was born a soldier, and he took with him into the field a genius which enabled him soon to become a master of his profession. In one year he established for himself a name which was the admiration and envy of many a veteran. Lord Wellington was not slow in discovering his abilities, and he thus early placed that reliance in his judgment which Picton afterwards justified upon a more conspicuous occasion.

Pursuing a few steps further the comparative statements which have been already adduced in proof of the correctness of General Picton's account, the following extract from Lord Wellington's despatch, dated Oliveira de l'Hopital, March 21st, 1811, is here inserted.

"The enemy withdrew his rear-guard from that river (the Ceira) in the course of the 16th; and we crossed it on the 17th, and had our posts on the Sierra de Murcella, the enemy's

army being in a strong position on the right of the Alva. They moved a part of their army on that night, but still maintained their position on the Alva, of which river they destroyed the bridges. We turned their left by the Sierra de Santa Quiteria with the third, first, and fifth divisions on the 18th, while the light division and the sixth manœuvred in their front from the Sierra de Murcella. These movements induced the enemy to bring to the Sierra de Morta the troops which had marched the preceding night, at the same time that they retired their corps from the Alva."

General Picton observes, "We were under the necessity of relaxing in our pursuit through a total deficiency of provisions, the convoys of which could not keep pace with the rapidity of our movements;" a necessity which gave to the enemy an advantage which they could not otherwise have hoped for. They destroyed everything in their path, burning the villages, and apparently striving to revenge themselves upon the defenceless inhabitants for their own reverses.

Lord Londonderry remarks: "It seemed as if these men had resolved to make a desert

of the country which they had failed to conquer; and that the war, which they professed at first to wage only with the English and their armed partisans, had been turned against its peaceable inhabitants." *

Whilst the allied army was halting for supplies, the enemy were continuing their retreat

* The following additional particulars of the cruel and devastating principle upon which this retreat was conducted are derived from a letter of a gentleman who accompanied the British army in its pursuit of the French, and who was consequently a spectator of what he here relates.

"It is impossible to describe the scenes of horror of which I have been an eye-witness, and which will for ever brand the name of Massena with execration. It is hard for anybody to believe that human nature could be guilty of such enormous and wanton wickedness. The city of Leyria had been eleven days on fire when I was there, and was burning still. Everything that could be taken away was removed, and the rest destroyed. The images in the churches were in pieces; the graves were actually opened for the sake of plunder. The nuns and friars, at all the towns where we came, had fled to the mountains; their convents were destroyed, and we found none but a few Portuguese perishing with hunger and ill-treatment. At every place where we halted, if we saw anything like a house with a door standing, we made it our head-quarters, and took possession of any table or chair that might have escaped the general devastation, as the mansions had no tenants to dispute our invasion. All was dreadful silence and desolation. The floors of almost every house had been pulled up wherever we passed, particularly at Leyria, where there were about

with the utmost expedition, being followed in their rear by the British cavalry and light infantry. Massena's object was evidently to endeavour to make an effectual stand against the advance of the allies, by concentrating his army upon the heights, and occupying the passes in front of Guarda. But much discontent existed at this time amongst Massena's generals: the impetuous Ney almost refused to co-operate with him; while Junot, Drouet, and Regnier were equally opposed in opinion.

Retreat is ever a trying moment for a commander-in-chief; the movement is disliked by all, and opinions are hardly ever wanting to prove that it was produced by bad management, and that at any one stage it might have been stopped. Still, all the odium is made to fall upon the chief, and every subordinate without restraint boldly asserts that he would, and his superior might have averted the evil;

twelve miserable wretches who had been unable to move from wounds and famine, some of whom expired before us. This city, four years since, contained thirty thousand inhabitants. Libraries were burned and scattered; and it seemed to be the intention of the enemy to leave a dreadful memorial of their fury, which never should be effaced from the recollection of the country."

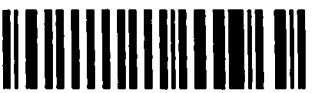
and, in consequence, it is universally allowed that he alone is to be answerable for every casualty or mismanagement attending the movements. Thus Massena was accused by his whole staff of want of skill, while each in his turn accused the others of giving him bad advice; and, in consequence, the retreating army more resembled a number of independent bands, than the organized force of a great and hitherto conquering nation.

The master-hand of Napoleon was never more wanted than at this moment; and had he acted upon this occasion with any of that foresight and decision which had so long marked his character, by hastening with a few fresh troops to put himself at the head of this disorganized army, he would at once have smothered the flame of discord, silenced the voice of disobedience, and perhaps have prevented, or at least delayed, his ruin. But he was too much engaged in dreams of conquest in the North, to turn for a moment to the affairs of the Peninsula. Wrapped up in his gigantic project against Russia, what were the affairs of the Peninsula to him? what the success of Lord Wellington and his five-and-thirty thou-

sand British? Let them advance; he could crush them in Spain, and there they would have no retreat! With such arguments as these he let the moment pass; and the progress of the allies into the very heart of France was never arrested for any time from the period they commenced their advance from the lines of Torres Vedras.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018